

THE NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY

A Historical Review of New England Life and Letters

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“Savages” in the Service of Empire: Native American
Soldiers in Gorham’s Rangers, 1744–1762

Brian D. Carroll

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Army in Newport, Rhode Island, 1780–1781

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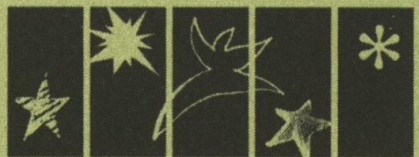
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“Savages” in the Service of Empire: Native
American Soldiers in Gorham’s Rangers,
1744–1762

BRIAN D. CARROLL

GORHAM’S RANGERS, formed in 1744 as an auxiliary unit of the Massachusetts provincial army, was an amphibious strike force that patrolled the coasts, inlets, bays, and rivers of the Canadian Maritimes in modified whaleboats.¹ Initially manned by Native Americans from southeastern Massachusetts and commanded by British colonial officers, by its final deployments in the early 1760s, Gorham’s Rangers had become a unit of mostly Anglo-Americans and recent Scots and Irish immigrants who, nonetheless, continued to employ the tactics the unit’s original Indian members had pioneered. For Indian members of the company the cost had been dear; combat fatalities, disease, debilitating wounds and injuries, and years of brutal captivity in French or Indian communities in Canada were common fates.

Robert Rogers is widely credited with instituting the American ranger tradition and, thus, with establishing, during the French and Indian War (1754–63), a uniquely American style of warfare based in Indian strategies. Dating that innovation to

I express my sincerest gratitude to Wayne E. Lee, Geoffrey Plank, and Andrew Pierce for sharing citations, sources, or copies of unpublished work. Also many thanks to Marna Carroll, Harald E. L. Prins, Wayne E. Lee, Daniel R. Mandell, Erik Seeman, William P. Tatum III, Jean-François Lozier, and Daniel Herman, all of whom commented on drafts or were willing to discuss aspects of the article with me.

¹Earlier units commanded by Benjamin Church had done likewise in Maine in the 1690s and early 1700s. See my “From Warrior to Soldier: New England Indians in the Colonial Military, 1676–1763” (Ph.D. diss., University of Connecticut, 2009), pp. 157–93.

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an earlier period, some scholars assert that Rogers was merely heir apparent to men such as Benjamin Church, who secured an English victory during King Philip's War (1675–76) by implementing Indian martial practices. Still others argue that the American way of war emerged from a grand, post-contact dialogical process that significantly altered military methods among Native Americans and Anglo-Americans alike.² Gorham's Rangers, arguably the true descendants of Church's early companies as well as the immediate antecedents to and model for Rogers's Rangers, offers an opportunity to assess these reigning assumptions and to examine the evolution of American warfare at the edges of empire.

Church and Rogers are well known largely because each published a detailed (and self-serving) memoir chronicling his accomplishments;³ John Gorham III (1709–51) and his younger

²Wayne Lee reviews the literature in "Early American Ways of War: A New Reconnaissance, 1600–1815," *Historical Journal* 44 (2001): 269–89, and in "Mind and Matter—Cultural Analysis in American Military History: A Look at the State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 93 (2007): 1116–42. John Grenier's assessment of the literature is much the same in *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607–1814* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 6–10. Russell Weigley, in his *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), argues for a uniquely American way of war characterized not by "irregular" or "regular" tactics but by wars of attrition or wars of annihilation. Armstrong Starkey, who posits in his *European and Native American Warfare* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1998) that Europeans were never terribly successful at adopting Native American frontier warfare (guerilla tactics) until 1814, essentially agrees with Guy Chet, who claims, in his *Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), that European linear tactics remained dominant throughout the colonial period. Refuting Starkey and Chet, Grenier insists that the early American way of war was characterized by intense intercultural violence, irregular frontier warfare, and campaigns of total war that were aimed at killing noncombatants and destroying Indian villages and resources. In "Mind and Matter," Lee concurs: "Norms of warfare against Indians included scalping, village destruction, food destruction, indiscriminate killing of women and children (or even allied Indians), enslavement, and very likely rape" ("Mind and Matter," p. 1128); Adam J. Hirsch, in "The Collision of Military Cultures in Seventeenth-Century New England," *Journal of American History* 74 (1988): 1187–212, and Patrick M. Malone, in *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics among the New England Indians* (New York: Madison Books, 1991), pioneered the "collision of military cultures" thesis, which maintains that Europeans and Native Americans adjusted to intercultural violence and adopted total war practices.

³Church's memoir was compiled toward the end of his life with the assistance of his son. Thomas Church, *Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip's War . . . Also*

brother Joseph (1724–90) left no such record. Still, as will be explored and analyzed below, widely scattered documents relating to the activities of Gorham's Rangers in the northeastern borderlands and to the company's origins, organization, and composition amply demonstrate the critical role the unit's Native American soldiers played in forging the "irregular" or guerilla tactics most often attributed to Church and to Rogers.⁴

"Indians and Other Men Fit for Ranging"

As early as King Philip's War, the colonies of Connecticut and Massachusetts began incorporating settlement or reservation Indians, in this case Mohegan and Pequot tribal units, into their armed forces while also forming special companies of Nipmuc and Wampanoag warriors led by English commanders. Over the next sixty-five years, as the colonies expanded this practice, Native Americans assumed an increasingly important role in New England's military endeavors. Why Indian warriors would have chosen to fight for their conquerors and oppressors is a complex phenomenon that speaks to the conditions they faced in the aftermath of King Philip's demise.

English victory in that conflict radically affected the lives of all Native Americans in southern New England. First, they lost their political independence; then, as colonial settlements encroached on their lands, they suffered a shrinking resource base and ecological change. In time, they were relegated to dozens of small reservations peppered throughout the region, or they eked out a living in enclaves on the margins of colonial

of Expeditions More lately made Against the Common Enemy, and Indian Rebels, in the Eastern Parts of New England . . . (Boston: Benjamin Green, 1716); *Journals of Major Robert Rogers: Containing An Account of several Excursions he made under the Generals who commanded upon the Continent of North America . . .* (London, 1765).

⁴Papers relating to Gorham's company are in Quebec, Ottawa, and Halifax in Canada and Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, Michigan, and California in the United States. The best history of Gorham's Rangers to date is in John Grenier's *The Far Reaches of Empire: War in Nova Scotia, 1710–1760* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), the strength of which lies in Grenier's detailed chronicling of the company's operational history. Grenier also briefly examined Gorham's Rangers in *The First Way of War*, pp. 68–69.

towns. Many converted to Christianity, began speaking English, and outwardly adopted aspects of European culture.⁵ As their appetite for the consumer goods of the transatlantic market economy increased, so did the Indians' indebtedness, which the colonists' predatory lending practices rendered chronic and persistent. To survive, Native men took jobs as common laborers and mariners, particularly as whalers. During the early eighteenth century, some were forced to indenture themselves to whites for terms ranging from a few months to as long as ten years, while women seeking to settle their debts indentured themselves, and sometimes their children, as servants in English households. Other Native women worked plots of land, dispensed herbal remedies, or produced handicrafts. Despite such attempts, settlement Indians became increasingly impoverished. For at least part of the year, some tribes and bands were dependent on the supplies provincial overseers or missionary aid societies distributed to them.⁶

Indian men, who faced discrimination, mounting debts, and grinding poverty, thus found it difficult to resist provincial recruiters' enticements, from cash signing bonuses to promises of

⁵The study of the cultural effects of colonialism on Native Americans in southern New England is extensive. Although by no means an exhaustive list, important recent works include Daniel R. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), and *Tribe, Race, History: Native Americans in Southern New England, 1780–1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Jean M. O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650–1790* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); David J. Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha's Vineyard, 1600–1871* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Amy E. Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest: Native Peoples and the Struggle for History in New England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Jenny Hale Pulsipher, "Subjects unto the Same King": *Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); and R. Todd Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians: Masculinity, Religion, and Colonialism in Early New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).

⁶See various overseers accounts for Mashpee (1749–51; 1758–61) and Punkapoag (1745–47), Massachusetts Archives Collection, Massachusetts State Archives, Boston, vols. 32:129; 33:179–84; 31:554a–56a. See also Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, pp. 188–99, 214–15, and Kevin McBride, "Transformation by Degree: Eighteenth-Century Native American Land Use," in *Eighteenth-Century Native Communities in Southern New England in the Colonial Context*, ed. Jack Campisi (Mashantucket, Conn.: Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, 2005), pp. 35–56.

scalp bounties.⁷ To encourage enlistment, provincial agents treated entire Indian communities to gifts of food, alcohol, and trade goods. Moreover, at a time when Protestant missionaries and colony officials sought to circumscribe the activities of Native American men and convert them into sedentary Christian farmers, the military offered a compelling alternative, one that honored older warrior traditions (bravery, ferocity in battle, and hunting skills) and held the promise of prestige similar to that conferred by Indian war parties.⁸ While the English saw military service as a means of channeling Indian aggression toward provincial and imperial ends, Native American leaders hoped that their men's contributions might carry weight in land and legal disputes and ultimately secure greater recognition of tribal sovereignty. Family and band loyalties also had an influence, for many indigenous enlistees came from interrelated communities and regularly enrolled with and served alongside kin.

New Englanders thought Indian populations living in their midst culturally inferior, but, like select other conquered peoples in the expanding British Empire, Native American soldiers serving in the provincial forces during King William's War (1689–97), Queen Anne's War (1703–13), and Governor Dummer's War (1722–26) were viewed as possessing a special aptitude for warfare, especially within a forest setting, and as absolutely vital to combating enemy Indians, who were skilled at resisting traditional English military maneuvers. Usually comprising between 15 and 20 percent of early New England military expeditions, Indian soldiers often served in autonomous, all-Indian companies commanded by English, and sometimes Native, officers.⁹

⁷Per statute, all indentured soldiers could keep enlistment bonuses, money earned from scalp bounties, as well as any plunder taken while on campaign. *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of Massachusetts Bay* . . . , vol. 13: 1741–1747 (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1905), p. 629.

⁸See Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians*, pp. 138–40.

⁹Cynthia Enloe, in her *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in a Divided Society* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982), uses the term “ethnic soldiers” to describe certain minority groups within a multi-ethnic state deemed trustworthy by ruling elites and well suited to military service. Wayne E. Lee, in his “Subjects, Clients, Allies or Mercenaries? The British Use of Irish and Indian Military Power, 1500–1815,” in *Britain's Oceanic Empire: British Expansion in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, c. 1550–*

Indians' role in the provincial army changed dramatically during King George's War (1744–48) and the French and Indian War. Due to Native population decline, greater imperial involvement, and the larger scale of the conflicts, Indians were less apt to serve in all-Indian units and instead were integrated into predominantly white companies. Only a handful advanced beyond the rank of corporal. Still, the demands of imperial warfare in the Northeast produced new opportunities for New England's Indian men, including positions in Gorham's ranger corps.¹⁰

The Gorham family was active in colonial New England's military affairs. John and Joseph's great-grandfather, John Gorham I, had been a commander for Plymouth Colony during King Philip's War. Their grandfather, John Gorham II, led English and Wampanoag troops during King William's War; he commanded first a company and then, later, a battalion, and he was Benjamin Church's second-in-command during campaigns against the Abenaki. John and Joseph's father, Shubael Gorham, was a veteran provincial officer of Queen Anne's War. Numerous uncles and cousins served as officers throughout the colonial era, some recruiting and commanding Indian soldiers. With the exception of the Churches, no other family was more responsible for the development of New England's Native American soldiery and the American ranger tradition than were the Gorhams and their kin.¹¹

1850, ed. H. V. Bowen, Elizabeth Mancke, and John G. Reid (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 179–217, sees a “martial race” as a particular group recruited for their expertise in a style of warfare, especially one suited to local conditions but integrated into the same organizational and technological structure as the rest of an army. See also Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857–1914* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2004); Tom Holm, “The militarization of Native America: Historical process and cultural perception,” *Social Science Journal* 34 (1997): 461–74; Harald E. L. Prins, *The Mi'kmaq: Resistance, Accommodation, and Cultural Survival* (New York: Wadsworth, 1996), pp. 85–87, 133–57.

¹⁰Other all-Indian units included three Native American companies in Roger's Rangers—two companies of Stockbridge Mohicans and one of Mohegans from Connecticut. See John R. Cuneo, *Robert Rogers of the Rangers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 42, 82, 94–96, 127.

¹¹Mass. Archives, 71:325, 381. Related family members included cousins Richard, Silvanus, William, and Melatiah Bourne.

As they attempted to subdue Acadians and Mi'kmaq Indians who challenged English sovereignty in Nova Scotia (previously Acadia) during the 1740s, the British relied heavily on New England's Native American soldiers.¹² Early in June 1744, Paul Mascerene, the governor and garrison commander at Annapolis Royal (formerly Port Royal), wrote to Massachusetts Governor William Shirley to ask for reinforcements for his besieged garrison, which was barricaded within Fort Anne. Mascerene requested "20 or 30 bold and warlike Indians" who could "awe the Indians of this peninsula[,] who believe all the Indians [who] come from New England are Mohawks[,] of whom they stand in great fear." The Massachusetts legislature approved funding for the relief force, and in July, Shirley wrote to the Lords of Trade in England outlining his plan:

I depend upon sending to Annapolis in a few days Seventy more Soldiers raised here, which will consist chiefly of pick'd Indians and other men fit for ranging the woods under a very expert Officer for that Service, who has undertaken (and upon a probable scheme as it appears to me) to destroy and drive off all the Indians.

His man for the job was John Gorham, whose family had extensive business and maritime connections as well as political and social clout. Undoubtedly lured by a lucrative bounty, almost all of the rangers who enlisted lived near Gorham's hometown of Yarmouth, on Cape Cod.¹³

¹²Nova Scotia became part of the British Empire in 1713, but the area was far from pacified in the 1740s. Acadia, present-day Nova Scotia and parts of present-day New Brunswick, was ill defined, and its borders were in contention. See Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign against the Peoples of Acadia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 40–41, 70–72, 76, and John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from Their American Homeland* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), pp. 136–45.

¹³Paul Mascerene to William Shirley, 9 June 1744, quoted in George A. Rawlyk, *Nova Scotia's Massachusetts: A Study in Massachusetts–Nova Scotia Relations, 1630–1784* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), pp. 140, 269; William Shirley, *Memoirs of the Principal Transactions of the Last War between the English and French in North-America—From the commencement of it in 1744, to the conclusion of the treaty at Aix la Chapelle . . .* (Boston, 1758), pp. 26, 28–29. New England Indians being confused with "Mohawks" probably stems from both New England Algonquians and Iroquois warriors, both in the service of the British, being stationed at Annapolis

As is evident from muster rolls and other descriptions, leadership positions—including three officers, four noncommissioned officers, a company clerk, and, unique to the unit, several “boatmasters,” who were responsible for the upkeep of the company’s six or seven large whaleboats—were monopolized by Anglo-Americans, some of whom were Gorham’s relatives. But the sixty remaining men, who made up the rank and file, were Native Americans. The vast majority, about fifty-five, were Nauset and Wampanoag Indians from Cape Cod (Barnstable County). The indigenous population of the area being in serious decline at the time, marshaling the company significantly strained the manpower resources of the area’s Indian communities (see fig. 1).¹⁴

Gorham also recruited a handful of Pigwacket warriors. This tribe’s traditional lands lay more than a hundred miles north of Cape Cod, along the upper Saco River in southwestern Maine and extending into the uplands of central New Hampshire. As members of the Wabanaki confederacy, an alliance of various Abenaki tribal communities in northeastern New England as well as Maliseet, Passamaquaddy, and Mi’kmaq groups, the Pigwacket were traditionally aligned with the

Royal in 1710–11. See Geoffrey Plank, “Deploying Tribes and Clans: Mohawks in Nova Scotia and Scottish Highlanders in Georgia,” in *Empires and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World*, ed. Wayne E. Lee (New York: New York University Press, 2011), pp. 221–49. For members of Gorham’s well-connected family holding positions as magistrates, missionaries, and reservation overseers, see Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of Barnstable County and of Its Several Towns*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1860, 1862), 1:378, 730–38; 2:203, 445; and *The Massachusetts Civil List for the Colonial and Provincial Period, 1630–1774*, ed. William H. Whitmore (Albany, N.Y.: J. Munsell, 1870), pp. 54–61, 72–76, 104–6, 113, 127, 141–46.

¹⁴The size of the unit has often been underestimated because the earliest muster roll lists just forty-one men (and only twenty-two Native Americans). But this roll in fact records a much depleted unit at the *end* of its first three-year deployment in 1746, not a full company at its *beginning*. The company initially contained seventy men, almost twice the number cited by John Grenier in *The First Way of War*, pp. 68–69, who also claimed that white frontiersmen were Gorham and Shirley’s preferred enlistees. See undated (ca. 1746) muster roll, John Gorham Papers, Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Joseph Gorham, “Return of Troops, Rangers from Nova Scotia,” 23 February 1748, Gilder Lehrman Collection, Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History, New York; “Names officers & men on Comd when took 3 frenchmen,” 1 January 1749/[1750], Gorham Papers (this appears to be a partial muster roll). For Indian population estimates of Barnstable County, see note 59.

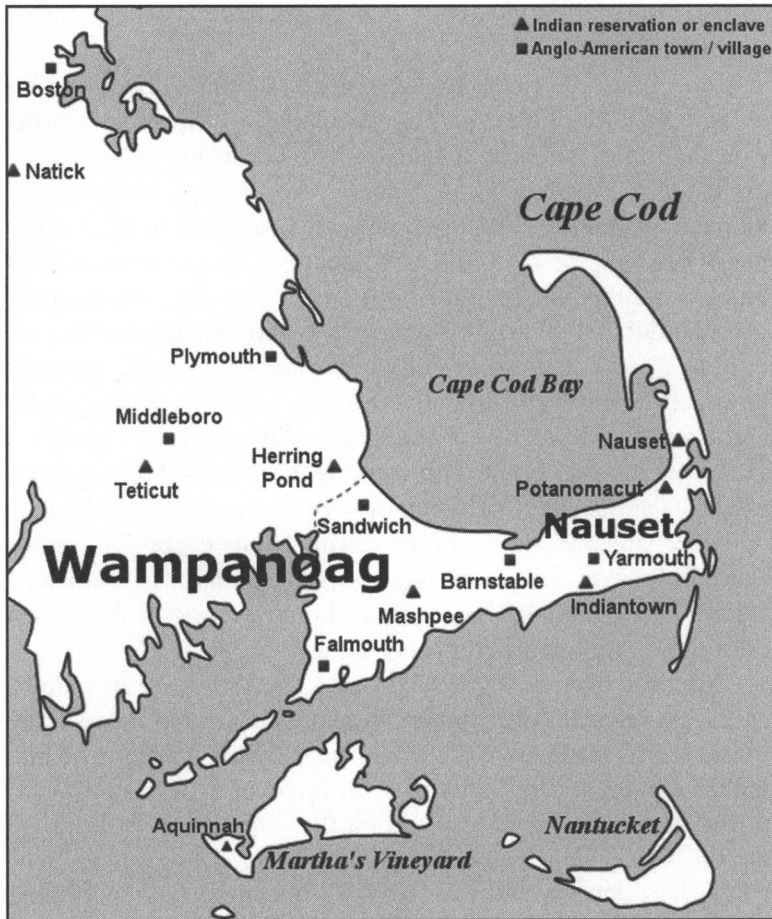


FIG. 1.—Cape Cod Indian enclaves (Barnstable County), circa 1750, the primary area of recruitment for Gorham's Rangers. Map prepared by author.

French and therefore enemies of the British. Thus, during periods of conflict, their close proximity to English settlements often forced them to flee for safety to the Saint Francis Jesuit mission at Odanak, near Quebec. In 1744, however, with King George's War looming, one small band instead placed itself under the protection of Massachusetts. Six of the men from this group agreed to serve in the provincial army and were assigned to Gorham's Rangers. As Benjamin Church had once done for bands of Wampanoag during King Philip's War, Gorham

helped relocate and assist the Pigwacket families during wartime.¹⁵

More than skill, patronage was key to Gorham's securing his commission. His father and another relative, Silvanus Bourne, were legislators who held seats on the Governor's Council. In exchange for their support, Shirley rewarded members of the interrelated families with government posts and military commissions. Despite his impressive political connections and his family's military background, Gorham was not, like other ranger commanders (specifically Rogers), a frontiersman; nor was he a hunter nor a veteran of earlier borderland wars. Apparently he was *not* taught the arts of war beyond the basics every colonial Englishman learned at the local militia muster—typically a rather amateurish event. Too young to have served on any prior military campaigns, Gorham was only thirteen at the outbreak of New England's last frontier conflict, Governor Dummer's War. Following this short regional war against the Wabanaki Confederacy, colonial New England enjoyed one of its longest periods of uninterrupted peace.

Gorham's first calling was the sea. He grew up in a mercantile family far from the frontier, in Barnstable, one of the oldest towns on Cape Cod, established by the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony in the mid-1630s. From a young age, he trained in the early whaling industry, then the most lucrative business on the Cape. According to one eyewitness, he was a "dextrous" harpooneer, and over time he became a skilled whaler, mariner, and merchant. He lived most of his adult life in coastal Yarmouth, adjacent to Barnstable, but did some land speculating and had investments, including several sawmills, in the frontier towns of southern Maine. When conflict between England and France recommenced in 1744, Gorham was

¹⁵Petition of John Gorham Esq. to the Governor and General Court of Massachusetts, Boston, 5 April 1749, Mass. Archives, 73:393–99; *Correspondence of William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts and Military Commander in America, 1731–1760*, vol. 1, ed. Charles Henry Lincoln (New York: Macmillan, 1912), p. 138. Various government dispatches deal with the Pigwacket coming into Massachusetts jurisdiction, including Mass. Archives, 31:494, 495, 501, 502; 32:2, 20–23. This band of Pigwackets settled for a time in Rochester, Mass. (see Mandell, *Beyond the Frontier*, pp. 130, 172).

thirty-five years old.¹⁶ Commanding whaling vessels had prepared him to lead the rangers. It not only familiarized him with leadership, discipline, and logistics, but, most important, it gave him practical experience in recruiting and managing Indians.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, indentured Indian servants comprised the vast majority of whalers in New England's shore industry as well the first crewmen on deep-sea whaling ships departing from area ports. We know from records of two of the voyages of Gorham's sloop *Neptune* that his crews were primarily Indians from local Native communities—like nearby Mashpee, where his father and uncle were the provincially appointed overseers. When hunting North Atlantic right whales, Gorham's ships resupplied and refitted in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and so he was familiar with the Maritime Provinces, where his company would later operate.¹⁷

The company's junior officers were just as inexperienced as Gorham, but there was depth in the ranks. A number of the enlistees, the vast majority of whom were indentured Indian whalers who worked for Gorham's family and associates, were also veteran soldiers and experienced rangers who had fought for the English in previous wars. Joseph Ralph, a village

¹⁶*Journal of the Honourable House of Representatives, of His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New England . . .* (Boston: Printed by Samuel Kneeland, 1740), p. 87; Francis G. Hutchins, *Mashpee: The Story of Cape Cod's Indian Town* (West Franklin, N.H.: Amarta Press, 1979), pp. 72–73, 83; *Expeditions of Honour: The Journal of John Salusbury in Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1749–1753*, ed. Ronald Rompkey (Dover: University of Delaware Press, 1982), pp. 115, 119.

¹⁷For Indians and early whaling, see Daniel Vickers, "The First Whalers of Nantucket," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 40 (1983): 560–83, and "Nantucket Whalers in the Deep-Sea Fishery: The Changing Anatomy of an Early American Labor Force," *Journal of American History* 72 (1985): 277–96; Elizabeth A. Little, "Indian Contributions to Shore Whaling," *Nantucket Algonquian Studies* 8 (1981): 38; Mark A. Nicholas, "Mashpee Wampanoags of Cape Cod, the Whaleshery, and Seafaring's Impact on Community Development," *American Indian Quarterly* 26 (2002): 162–95; Russell Lawrence Basch, "'Colored' Seamen in the New England Whaling Industry: An Afro-Indian Consortium," in *Confounding the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America*, ed. James F. Brooks (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002); John Braginton-Smith and Duncan Oliver, *Cape Cod Shore Whaling: America's First Whalers* (Yarmouth, Mass.: Historical Society of Old Yarmouth, 2004). For Gorham's whaling interests, see "Jno. Gorham's Memorandum or Dayly Journal," 1737–38, and John Gorham's "Wast[e] Book," 1745, Special Collections [microform], Sturgis Library, Barnstable, Mass.

leader among the Nauset, served in a similar all-Indian ranger company twenty years earlier during Governor Dummer's War. Commanded by Captain Richard Bourne (1694–1738), another of Gorham's kinsmen, the unit deployed three times to the Maine frontier in 1724–25. Its mission each time was to subdue Indian resistance to British rule, which involved raiding Abenaki villages and scouting for and skirmishing with small Native war parties. Older, more experienced in military matters, and better connected politically than Bourne, Shubael Gorham helped organize and outfit his relative's company, supplying it with much of its equipment and its special whaleboats. John knew (or would later know) many of these Indians, who went on to work on the vessels he owned. One, James Queach of Yarmouth, had also served in Bourne's company. Renowned for having killed a Norridgewock sachem in one-on-one combat, he had also scalped four or five Abenaki in a single encounter during the war. Another Nauset recruited in 1744 was Peter Dogamus, also of Yarmouth. Then in his fifties, he was probably the most experienced warrior on the Cape, having served in Queen Anne's War more than thirty years earlier in an all-Indian company recruited by Benjamin Church and commanded by Church's son. As a member of this unit, Dogamus took part in the 1710 siege and capture of Port Royal, so for him the area around Annapolis Royal was familiar territory. Like Ralph, Queach, and others in the unit, he had also served in Bourne's 1724–25 companies. Several of the Pigwacket contingent were also veterans of Governor Dummer's War, but, as members of the Wabanaki Confederacy, they had fought against the English.¹⁸

¹⁸For muster lists for Richard Bourne's 1725 companies, see Mass. Archives, 91:139–41, 178–80, 223. Bourne's unit took a leading role in the August 1724 attack on Norridgewock. See *Boston News-Letter*, 27 August 1724; *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 10 September 1724; anon., *The Rebel's Reward: Or, English Courage Display'd, Being A Full and True Account of the Victory over the Indians at Norridgewock* (Boston, 1725); Grenier, *The First Way of War*, p. 38; Samuel Penhalow, *The History of the Wars of New-England with the Eastern Indians* (Boston, 1726), p. 132. The junior officers included John's brother Joseph and their cousin William Bourne (1723–70). Samuel Eliot Morison, "Harvard in the Colonial Wars, 1675–1748," *Harvard Graduates Magazine* 26 (1917–18): 572.

The Pigwacket members, while few in number, were vital to the company's initial success. Serving from its formation through its first two deployments (until 1750), they "behav'd with Courage & Faithfulness against our Enemies," according to Gorham. Among the Pigwackets was a man the colonists called "Captain Sam," probably the leader French sources referred to as Jérôme Atecouando, son of the sachem Atecouando, and later a celebrated orator among the Abenaki at Odanak. His Christian name, Jérôme, was sometimes rendered by the English on treaties as "Saaram," which may have been bastardized to "Sam." Probably in his mid-forties when recruited to the rangers, he had been an important leader among his people since 1729, when he first represented the Pigwacket at treaty signings. According to Gorham, the Pigwackets' intimate knowledge of Mi'kmaq territory caused their foes "no small uneasiness" during the war. A skilled guide, scout, translator, and negotiator, Captain Sam was recognized in several sources as Gorham's most trusted Indian soldier, which suggests that he was an unofficial officer, perhaps adjutant.¹⁹

"Their Skulking Way of Fighting"

Called up to "awe the local Indians," awe they did. Once on the frontier, Gorham's Rangers had a dramatic impact. "These

¹⁹Petition of John Gorham; Captain Sam, or Captain Samuel, was probably the Pigwacket/Arresaguntacook/St. Francis sachem identified in French and English records alternately as "Saaroom," "Salom," or "Jerome" (at treaty of 1727). His full name is most likely Jérôme Atecouando (rendered in colonial records variously as Atecuando, Atièouando, and Adeawando). His father, the sachem Atecouando of Pigwacket, signed the treaty of Portsmouth in 1713 (a "Capt. Sam" of Kennebec also signed). His brother was most likely a man the English called Sussup (sometimes spelled Sozap or Suzack), known to the French as Joseph Atecouando. According to Gordon Day's translation, Atecouando means "deer spirit-power" or possibly "dog spirit-power." Jerome's child might have been the renowned Molly Ockett, a famous doctor and herbalist who later married a Sussup—possibly a cousin. See Gordon M. Day, *The Identity of the St. Francis Indians* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1981), pp. 3, 32–38, 41–42, 67–68; *Boston News-Letter*, 4 October 1744; *Boston Post Boy*, 11 November 1744; *New York Weekly Journal*, 26 December 1748; *Documentary History of the State of Maine*, ed. James P. Baxter, vol. 11 ("Baxter Manuscripts"), *Collections of the Maine Historical Society*, 2nd ser. (1908), pp. 60, 71–74; Bunny McBride and Harald E. L. Prins, "Walking the Medicine Line: Molly Ockett, a Pigwacket," in *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632–1816*, ed. Robert S. Grumet (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), pp. 325–29.

Indians, under the management of officers who understood the proper use of them, and to whose orders they were perfectly obedient,” Shirley recalled, liberated Annapolis Royal. They scouted and patrolled forested areas for which “Regular Troops are by no means fit.” Mascarene, too, noted that the rangers were adept at countering the forest warfare tactics of the Mi’kmaq, even as he tried to rescue English troops from a humiliating comparison with the provincial auxiliaries. Writing to the Lords of Trade in England, he reported that

the preservation of this place is owing to the reinforcement we have received from the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, and how necessary it is to set Indians against Indians; for tho’ our men outdo them in bravery yet being unacquainted with their skulking way of fighting and scorning to fight undercover, expose themselves too much to the enemy’s shot.

Gorham’s strategy to subdue local resistance included subterfuge, “skulking,” surprise attacks, and terror against enemy noncombatants, including taking captives (some used as hostages, some killed, and a few sold for servants in New England), and killing and scalping Mi’kmaq women and children.²⁰

According to a newspaper account, “the Garrison soldiers [were] entirely unacquainted with the manner of hunting and pursuing [Indians] in the Woods, and Bush fighting in skulking parties.” And so Gorham’s Rangers taught them their ways. In December 1746 and January 1747, records show that they also trained a battalion of Massachusetts provincial troops stationed at a garrison at Grand Pré, in northwestern Nova Scotia, in the basics of guerilla warfare (see fig. 2). Their brand of warfare was not uniquely Native American but represented more than a century of military innovation targeted toward and evolving out of the exigencies of the frontier. In the seventeenth century the region’s Native Americans adopted firearms and

²⁰Shirley, *Memoirs of the Principal Transactions*, pp. 28–29; Shirley to the Duke of Newcastle, 27 February 1746, in *Documentary History of the State of Maine*, 11:314–15; Paul Mascarene to the Lords of Trade, 25 September 1744, in *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia*, ed. Thomas B. Atkins (Halifax, 1869), pp. 133–34; Grenier, *First Way of War*, pp. 72, 80, 85, and *The Far Reaches of Empire*, p. 153.

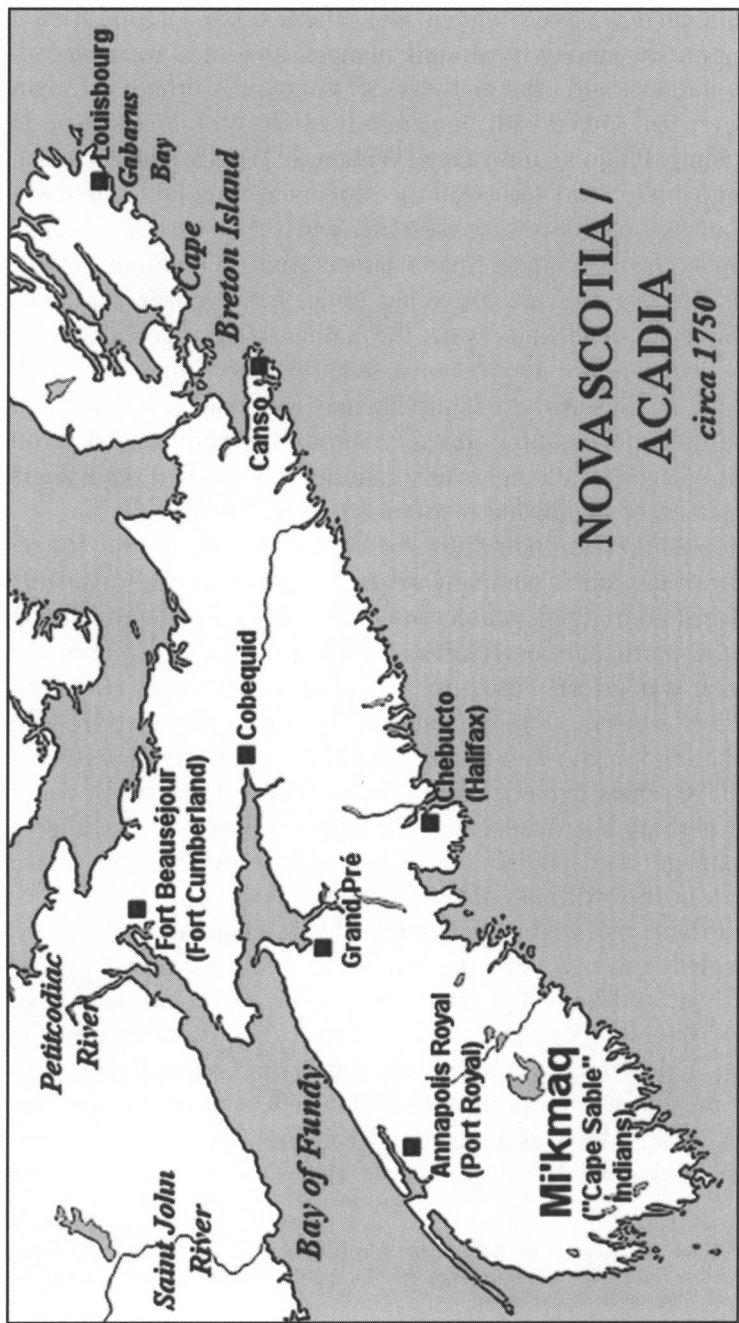


FIG. 2.—Nova Scotia (Acadia), circa 1750, Gorham's Rangers main area of operations, 1744–1761. Map prepared by author.

steel-edged weapons which, along with other factors, fueled competition among tribes and changed how wars were waged. The fathers and grandfathers of some of Gorham's Indian rangers had served with Benjamin Church and John Gorham II in King Philip's and King William's Wars. Many of the Wampanoag who enlisted in the rangers in 1744 had honed the techniques of the prior generation when they battled Abenaki peoples during Queen Anne's and Governor Dummer's War. Tracking enemies, maneuvering under forest cover, and skirmishing in small units were the hallmarks of colonial Native American warfare. On reconnaissance around Annapolis Royal, Indian rangers gathered intelligence on opponents and then used this information to harass them during nighttime raids on their villages. The rangers also rounded up Acadian ringleaders suspected of organizing resistance against British rule.²¹

In addition to their intimate understanding of the forest, many of Gorham's company were also adroit on water. Writing to Gorham in 1746, Mascarene demonstrated his appreciation for the particular contribution the rangers were making to the British war effort. "Your people being for the most part *both soldiers, sailors and wood rangers*," he noted, they "were [well] acquainted in the way of annoying the enemy we have to deal with." Gorham agreed. Acadia "was so cut and divided by water that nothing but Whaleboats and Men used to them could gain advantage over [the] Indians there; whose dependence lay so much in the swiftness of their canoes."²²

Gorham was well acquainted with his whalemens' dexterity. Joseph Ralph had been the "endsman"—the man who steered the boat and launched the harpoon—of an Indian whaleboat crew on one of Gorham's sloops. From 1744 until his death in 1749, Ralph soldiered for his old skipper in Gorham's Rangers. Before the war, corporal Jeremy Queach, one of the few Natives awarded noncommissioned officer rank in the rangers, worked as a whaler for Benjamin Bangs of Harwich. Another

²¹*Boston News-Letter*, 15 November 1744; Mascarene to the Lords of Trade, 25 September 1744; Grenier, *First Way of War*, pp. 74–75; Shirley, *Memoirs of the Principal Transactions*, pp. 28–29.

²²*Correspondence of William Shirley*, 1:339; Petition of John Gorham; Church, *The History of Philip's War*, p. 213.

Nauset, Joseph Twiney, also from Harwich, was in the rangers from 1748 through 1752, when the company was stationed at Annapolis Royal and, thereafter, Halifax. During that time, he amassed a considerable debt to Edward Winnet, the captain of one of the ranger's transports, from whom he had borrowed money because, like others in the company, Twiney was an indentured servant and so his wages were sent to his English master back on Cape Cod. At the end of his enlistment, Twiney had the choice of indenturing himself to Winnet as a whaler or going to debtors' prison. He chose whaling. If the connection between whaling and the ranger service was not clear enough, on 14 October 1744, Gorham and ten Indian rangers daringly rowed their whaleboat up to an armed French warship entering the harbor at Annapolis Royal. A whale surfaced nearby. The whaling captain and Indian whalers followed their instincts; they attacked the whale instead of the ship.²³

The force quickly earned a reputation as effective guerilla fighters who instilled fear in their enemies, just as Mascarene had hoped. Shortly after arriving at Annapolis Royal in 1744, a Massachusetts newspaper reported that "Capt. Gorham who commands a Company that went thither from this province, had lately brought into that Garrison the scalps of three of the Cape Sable's or St. John's Indians [Mi'kmaq]; also a Papoose alive." In the autumn of 1749, the rangers sparked an international incident when, unprovoked and in spite of a truce, Gorham's unit crossed into French-controlled territory, captured two Abenaki peace envoys, and demanded at gunpoint that the Mi'kmaq of

²³Joseph Ralph married Deborah Joel at the Indian meetinghouse in Yarmouth on 24 September 1727 (*Vital Records of Yarmouth, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850*, comp. Robert M. Sherman and Ruth Wilder Sherman [Providence: Society of Mayflower Descendants in Rhode Island, 1975]). For Ralph's service on the *Neptune*, see John Gorham's "Waste Book"; for reference to Ralph as an "Indian Justice," see "Vital Records of the Towns of Eastham and Orleans," *Mayflower Descendant*, various issues, 1901–35. For Queach, see Benjamin Bangs Diary, vol. 1: 1741–49, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), Boston, entries for 19–20 September 1744; see also undated (ca. 1746) muster roll of Gorham's Rangers. For Twiney, see Nathaniel Stone, account against Captain Joseph Winnet, 1751, Bourne Family, Massachusetts Military Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. In early August 1751, John Salusbury recalled how John Gorham set out in a boat and "killed a Porpoise in a Whaling manner" (*Expeditions of Honour*, pp. 115, 119). Seemingly apocryphal, the incident with the French ship and the whale was mentioned alongside observations that can be corroborated in other sources (see *Boston News-Letter*, 15 November 1744).

the Saint John River region submit to British authority. That same year, a party of Mi'kmaq ambushed a construction crew on the outskirts of Halifax. Rather than the local militia, officials sent Gorham and his rangers in pursuit because they could "fight them in their own way," meaning they utilized ranger tactics.²⁴

The way in which the rangers fought attracted a good deal of attention. Like Church decades before and Rogers a decade later, Gorham eschewed massed-infantry tactics, whereby soldiers in tight formation fired largely un-aimed volleys at the opponent's line, the norm in conventional European warfare. Instead, he emphasized marksmanship, that is, shooting at individual targets. The rangers' waterborne operations were also admired. A detachment from the Seventh Massachusetts Regiment, including Indians from the rangers, was the first unit ashore at Gabarus Bay on 4 May 1745, at the start of the expedition to seize Louisbourg from the French. Led by Gorham and using whaleboats and ranger tactics, the detachment engaged two hundred French soldiers sent to repel them. But it was the French force that was surprised and quickly surrounded by Gorham's smaller force. A New Englander observing the *mêlée* recounted it.

We had but 100 landed, under Col. Gorham, *who did not stay to draw up in form*, but surrounded the French, and kept popping at them, kill'd 4 or 5 and wounded several, and took a great many prisoners. . . . In landing we had 2 men wounded. The French say our Men fight like Devils; for go which way they will they are popping at them like true *Indian* hunters.

They fought like Indians because many of them *were* Indians. Surviving records indicate that two out of every five privates

²⁴*New York Weekly Journal*, 19 November 1744; *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, vol. 6, ed. John R. Brodhead and E. B. Callaghan (Albany, 1855), pp. 478–84; *New York Mercury*, 5 June 1756; John Knox, *An Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America for the Years 1757, 1758, 1759, and 1760*, 3 vols. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1914–16), 1:394–95; Roland-Michel Barrin de La Galissoniere to Shirley, 26 June and 25 July 1749, in *Report Concerning Canadian Archives for the Year 1905*, 3 vols. (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1906), 2:54, app. N-303-306; *Boston News-Letter*, 12 October 1749.

in the Seventh Massachusetts were Native Americans. Like the rangers, they were mostly Wampanoags from Cape Cod, as well as from Plymouth and Bristol counties, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket.²⁵

In addition to amphibious landings and skirmishing tactics, Gorham and his Indian rangers frequently employed stealth and subterfuge. Fluent in French, John Gorham convincingly impersonated a Canadian officer on several occasions to gather intelligence or take prisoners. Joseph Gorham, at the time a lieutenant, and sixty rangers raided the Acadian settlement at Cobequid in late 1749. The Abbé Jean-Louis Le Loutre (1709–72), a leader of the Acadian resistance in the area, noted that “Mr. Gorom came stealthily and at night, and carried off our pastor and our four deputies. . . . he is ordered to seize upon all the guns found in our houses, and consequently to reduce us to a condition similar to that of the Irish.” Le Loutre understood British intentions; the Acadians fought a bitter partisan struggle against the English from the late 1740s through the 1750s.²⁶

Captured, Assimilated, Reedemed—but Not Rewarded

Like English soldiers (as well as many civilians), Indians from southern New England who were fighting in the colonial wars were occasionally captured by French-allied Indians. A more

²⁵John Gorham, Journal [Fort Sackville, Nova Scotia], 9–16 September 1749, John Gorham Papers. Gorham's rank in the British army was captain. His provincial rank was lieutenant colonel. Some sources confuse him with his father, a colonel. On the landing, see *Boston Evening Post*, 20 May 1745. On the composition of the Seventh Regiment, see Charles Hudson, “Louisbourg Soldiers,” *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 25 (1871): 60–62, and “Lt. Colonel John Gorham's Regiment,” 20 November 1745, William Pepperell Papers (1664–1782), microfilm reel 2, MHS. From the rolls, 34.6 percent of the regiment's men can be identified as either Indians, mulattoes, or mustees. If one excludes officers and noncommissioned officers, Indians made up 41.4 percent of all privates.

²⁶*Papers Relating to the Forcible Removal of the Acadian French, 1755–1768*, ed. T. B. Akins, *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia*, vol. 2 (Halifax: Charles Annand, 1869), pp. 231–32. For information on Le Loutre, see Gérard Finn, “Le Loutre, Jean-Louis,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* (University of Toronto / Université Laval), <http://www.biographi.ca>. For more on the insurgency led by Le Loutre, see Grenier, *The Far Reaches of Empire*, pp. 138–76, and John Gorham to William Shirley, 4 October 1746, John Gorham Papers.

complex cultural phenomenon than can be fully treated here, mourning war practices were common to cultures throughout the colonial Northeast and often determined the fate of war captives, who were apprehended to avenge or stand in for deceased loved ones. Captives could be ritually tortured and killed to assuage their captors' grief; adopted into captors' families and community to replace lost members; or ransomed to French colonists in Canada, by this time an important source of money and trade goods for many Native communities.²⁷ The numerous narratives written by former captives are a valuable source for historians, anthropologists, and literary scholars, for they provide rich descriptions of intercultural encounters as well as important, albeit problematic, ethnographic accounts of indigenous culture. They are limited, however, for all were prepared by Euro-Americans, none by Indians. Still, Indians who were captured and later redeemed did submit petitions for back pay and pension requests to provincial authorities, and these documents raise crucial questions about citizenship, race and identity, the role of Indian family members in securing the release of captured loved ones, and the responsibility of provincial governments to their Native subjects.

On 6 July 1749, the *Boston News-Letter* printed a letter detailing English efforts to redeem men and women captured and imprisoned in Canada during King George's War. Tacked to the end was a notice: "We also hear, that there are nine Cape Cod Indians at Canada, five of which were taken at Annapolis Royal, who were under the Command of Col. Gorham in the year 1745; some of them are sold as Slaves to the Indians; that they are very desirous of being redeemed."²⁸ In May 1745, approximately five hundred French soldiers, Acadian

²⁷Jon Parmenter, "After the Mourning Wars: The Iroquois as Allies in Colonial North American Campaigns, 1676–1760," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64 (2007): 39–82; Peter J. Way, "The Cutting Edge of Culture: British Soldiers Encounter Native Americans in the French and Indian War," in *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1850*, ed. Martin Daunt and Rick Halpern (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 131–35; Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755–1763* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁸*Boston News-Letter*, 6 July 1749.

militiamen, and their Native American allies had attacked the garrison at Annapolis Royal and seized the Indian rangers as well as English crewmen from two provincial supply schooners, *Seaflower* and *Montague*. Over the next two months, in a journey of more than five hundred miles, the prisoners were marched across Nova Scotia to present-day New Brunswick, up the Saint John River and overland to Quebec, where they arrived on 25 July. All of the English captives and one Native American soldier were imprisoned in the city; the remaining captive Indians were re-adorned in the clothing and hairstyles of their Abenaki and Huron captors and dispersed into Indian communities around Quebec. Phineas Stevens encountered several of the captured rangers while on a diplomatic mission to Canada. He concluded that they despaired of ever being redeemed. Stevens wrote, they “take it very hard that they are not treated as the rest of King George’s subjects,” suggesting that they felt the English had an obligation to secure their release yet had abandoned them because they were Indians.²⁹

The fate of the five captured rangers can be traced in surviving records. Two living in Native American villages began as “slaves” but in time, like many Anglo-American captives, were fully assimilated into the Indian communities in which they resided, where they chose to stay rather than return to New England after the war. Isaac Peck, a Wampanoag, remained among the Abenaki at the Saint Francis mission at Odanak, where he converted to Catholicism and took a wife. There he would have encountered men he knew from his days in Gorham’s company. Three of his Pigwacket comrades—Captain Sam, Sabbatis, and Keysor—relocated their families to the mission rather than returning to New England. Another captive ranger, Philip Will, was a tall, lanky fourteen-year-old when he was captured in 1745. Like many other rangers, he was an indentured Wampanoag servant, probably a Mashpee, who had been raised in an English household. At his master’s home in Barnstable, he learned to read and write English before going to Nova Scotia with the rangers. Adopted by the Arosaguntacook

²⁹Mass. Archives, 38a:148.

(Androscoggin), a band of Eastern Abenaki who lived on the southern Maine coast, over time the child-soldier grew into manhood, took a new name, and eventually became the band's sachem. In this capacity, he put his literacy to good use in negotiating with colonial officials over land disputes between his adoptive tribe and English settlers who had invaded the region after the war.³⁰

Other rangers, however, clearly wished to return home. Jacob Chammock, from the Herring Pond reservation in Plymouth, Massachusetts, was held by the French in Canada. Unsuccessfully attempting to escape several times, he was finally released after two years. Peter Dogamus, despite being one of the rangers' most experienced warriors, was likewise apprehended. Savagely beaten by his captors during the trek from Nova Scotia to Canada, he resided in an Indian village near Quebec, probably the small Huron community at Lorette, for the next five years. According to his later pension request, his status there remained akin to that of a servant or slave, which, as other evidence suggests, was not uncommon. Most captive Native American soldiers seem to have been treated more harshly than their white counterparts.³¹

The families of these and other captured Indian rangers barraged Gorham with petitions, urging him to redeem their

³⁰For Peck, see Joseph Gorham, "Return of Troops, Rangers from Nova Scotia," 23 February 1748, Gilder Lehrman Collection; Emma Lewis Coleman, *New England Captives Carried to Canada*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1897; repr. 2008), 2:402. For Will, see George A. Wheeler and Henry W. Wheeler, *History of Brunswick, Topsham, and Harpswell* (Boston, 1878), p. 3.

³¹The account of Dogamus's capture is taken from his pension request, Mass. Archives, 73:744, and *The Journal of Captain William Pote, Jr., during his Captivity in the French and Indian War from May 1745 to August 1747* (New York, 1896), pp. 59–60, 62–63, 86. Although Pote does not mention Dogamus by name, he does refer to Jacob Chammock and Caleb Popmonet and describes several other Indian soldiers traveling with him. See also Mass. Archives, 91:139–41, 178–80; *Collection de Manuscrits Contenant Mémoires, et Autre Documents Historiques Relatifs à La Nouvelle-France, Recueillis aux Archives de la Province de Québec, ou Copiés à L'Étranger*, vol. 3 (Quebec, 1884), pp. 488–89, 491; records in the Mass. Archives that describe redeemed captive Indian soldiers reporting being treated as slaves or servants include: Joseph Joseph (79:564); Nathan Joseph (84:302–20); John Pequet (33:194–94a); Aaron Conkaney (84:317); Philip Metack (33:73); and Joseph Metack (33:133, 161–62, 224). The author would like to thank Andrew Pierce for the last two citations.

missing family members or to aid them directly or secure the province's financial assistance to alleviate the hardships they suffered in the wake of their family member's captivity or death. Some even threatened legal action against Gorham. Writing to Shirley in 1749 to request relief for "the Squas and heirs," Gorham complained that compensation for Mi'kmaq scalps and prisoners taken during the 1744 siege of Annapolis Royal was still outstanding. Prisoners and scalps had been sent back to Massachusetts in expectation of the bounty the colony had offered, but, the commander explained, "some clause" in the statute's wording had "delayed the payment." When they learned that they might not receive their bounties due to a technicality, one that smacked of the deceitfulness that had characterized land deals with the English over the years, the rangers were livid. In a petition to the General Court, Gorham stated that in early 1745 his company's Indian members "Desired and Impowered" him to return to Massachusetts and demand the bounties from the legislature.³²

Southern New England Natives living under colonial jurisdiction had, by the 1740s, a long tradition of petitioning provincial overseers, governors, and legislatures for redress. Far from passive victims of colonial exploitation, the Indians persuaded their overseers to mediate disputes with town and colony officials, and they were not above petitioning the Crown if local governments proved unresponsive. Within a military context, however, few provincial troops, despite famously viewing their martial obligations contractually, would have thought themselves in possession of any form of power which they might choose to assert or transfer. But Gorham's language conveys that understanding of a constitutive body (the Indian soldiers) issuing an order to its representative (their commander). The rangers' "empowerment" of Gorham also reflected the consensus model that characterized southern New England Native politics. The group having come to a decision, their commander, here assuming the role of a sachem, was compelled to act on it. If he did not, as earlier colonial conflicts had amply

³²Petition of John Gorham.

demonstrated, Indian soldiers would display their displeasure by deserting or refusing to reenlist.³³

The scalp bounties were not only a potent recognition of Indians' war prowess; they were for many rangers and their families the *only* money they would receive for their service. Provincial muster rolls show that about one-third of New England Indians in the armed forces were indentured servants. Their masters received their pay. Perhaps another third were deeply in debt and signed over or promised their wages to creditors, in some cases even before they had deployed. Thus, the majority of the region's Native American soldiers received little or nothing in hand for having risked their lives. By law, masters and creditors could attach base pay but could not touch what was earned beyond wages, including enlistment bonuses, plunder, premiums for captives, and scalp bounties.³⁴

Before the General Court had a chance to hear Gorham's petition on behalf of his Indian soldiers, the region was again swept up in military preparations. The distracted assembly, consumed with the forthcoming siege of Louisbourg in the summer of 1745, never returned to the petition, which was subsequently destroyed in a fire along with Gorham's accompanying documentation, and for the next seven years the bureaucratic process continued to unravel. Many Indian families entitled to a share of the scalp bounties were convinced that Gorham had been duplicitous in the affair. Desperate to escape the constant pestering of the "squaws," Gorham submitted additional petitions. But the company was in limbo, caught in a transition (1747–48) between a provincial auxiliary unit and a regular

³³Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, p. 157; Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500–1776* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 176–79, 313; and Mark D. Walters, "Mohegan Indians v. Connecticut (1705–1773) and the Legal Status of Aboriginal Customary Laws and Government in British North America," *Osgoode Hall Law Review* 33 (1995): 785–829. Mohegans throughout the colonial period often challenged the authority of their Anglo-American commanders. They refused to fight for the English for more than two years during Queen Anne's War over the same issue facing Gorham's company in 1745—nonpayment of scalp bounties.

³⁴"Rolls of Enlisted Men . . . [1745–1749]," and "Transfers of Wages [1748–1749]," French and Indian War Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Conn. See also n. 7.

To the Publisher of the Gazette.
*Please to insert this in your next, which may save much Time, Expence
 and Paper, to any that maybe interested in the following Notification.*
THIS is to desire all Persons acquainted with the Indian Soldiers
 now living that were at Annapolis under my Command when
 the Scalps and Indian Prisoner was obtained in the Year 1744, on
 their Squaws, or any others impowred by them, that I have not as
 yet received one Farthing for the Scalps, and have been obliged to
 maintain the Indian Prisoner then taken at my own Cost ever since;
 but am not quite out of Hopes of being considered in the Price of
 Scalps, when I obtain the Bounty; at which Time I shall immedi-
 ately inform all Claimers when I receive it, and must desire they
 would desist coming or sending any Orders on that Account for the
 present.
By their Captain and Fellow-Sufferer.
J. Gorham.

FIG. 3.—John Gorham placed this notice about scalp bounties in the *Boston Gazette*, 14 April 1747, to notify rangers and the families of deceased or imprisoned company members that he was having difficulty obtaining payment for Mi'kmaq scalps they had taken in 1744. Image courtesy American Antiquarian Society.

army force. During this period, Gorham footed the company's expenses, expecting that he would be reimbursed, and so he lacked the wherewithal to compensate the families of rangers who had been killed or captured (see fig. 3).

By 1751, when the assembly finally took up Gorham's new petitions, his company had already been absorbed into the British army. The parsimonious Massachusetts legislature took the easy out, claiming that the scalp bounties were no longer within its jurisdiction. Moreover, King George's War was over, and, aside from a few frontier garrisons, the Bay Colony had recalled and disbanded its provincial forces. Its mission now aligned more with imperial goals than with those of Massachusetts, Gorham's unit stayed on in Nova Scotia. Meanwhile, having been absent from Massachusetts for the better part of six years, Gorham was losing clout. His father had died in 1746, and so John no longer had Shirley's ear. Disheartened by his repeated failures with the provincial government, Gorham petitioned his newly ordained military superiors in England to clear his accounts relating to the company. Before a settlement was reached, Gorham died (in

late 1751).³⁵ The bounties went unpaid. The Indian families from the Cape never received the money owed them.

Unpaid bounties aside, in January 1749, the deluge of petitions and requests from the rangers' family members, none of which survive, spurred both Crown and province to take a greater interest in the plight of those who had been captured and were languishing in Canada. Lieutenant Governor Spencer Phips organized a committee to investigate the matter. Led by Thomas Berry, a judge and legislator from Ipswich and member of the Governor's Council, the committee recommended that Phips write to the governor of Canada to inform him that "the Indians Captivated from Nova Scotia in the late War, are Subjects of the King of Great Britain having been born within this province." Therefore, Berry continued, they should "equally enjoy the privileges" thereof, and the French should "forthwith give Liberty, and Signifie it to any and every Indian (that may still remain in Canada Captivated as aforesaid) his leave for them to return to this Province and by no means to detain them against their wills" nor continue to allow them to be "sold for Slaves."³⁶ Agreeing to an exchange, French officials began the task of locating Indian captives within their borders.

Despite their efforts, only one Indian ranger, Peter Dogamus, declared himself ready to return. Along with a number of Anglo-American captives desiring repatriation, he was brought to Fort Saint-Frederick (later Crown Point) in July 1750. A few weeks later, the individuals were exchanged for French prisoners held by the English. Dogamus then made his way back to New England, and in January 1751 he was in Barnstable seeking assistance from Melatiah Bourne, Gorham's cousin and business agent in New England. Bourne helped Dogamus, now more than sixty years old, obtain a pension from the province

³⁵For more on the bounty issue, see John Gorham to Maserene, November 1749, John Gorham Papers; *Boston Post-Boy*, 9 March 1752; and John Gorham Petition.

³⁶A royal proclamation arrived from Whitehall a month later echoing the substance of Berry's report (Mass. Archives, 31:686, 692). Gorham notes in his 1749 petition to the Massachusetts General Court that he had been receiving these requests and petitions from Indian families for several years and further mentions that the accompanying documentation submitted with his later petitions was destroyed in a courthouse fire.

based on his forty-plus years of service and the suffering he had endured as a captive in Canada. In his pension request to Phips, Dogamus, with Bourne's help, described himself as having "grown old & spent great parts of his life in ye Service." Claiming he was "not able to support himself," he asked Phips to grant him an allowance. Hardly treated like a subject of the king or an inhabitant of the province entitled to certain rights, as Berry had recommended two years earlier, Dogamus encountered an assembly only slightly less tight fisted than the one Gorham had petitioned. Granted no back pay for his time in captivity, Dogamus was awarded only £6 per annum, one-quarter to one-third of what a provincial soldier earned in a nine-month deployment.³⁷

"Scouring the Country of the Deluded French"

During the Seven Years War, Gorham's Rangers was the brutal fist of British imperialism in the Maritimes. Generally portrayed as early "special forces" or frontier super-soldiers, colonial rangers in that conflict, especially Roger's Rangers, are often highly romanticized. The truth is far from glamorous. The role the British army assigned to Gorham's Rangers was to terrorize, persecute, and deport civilian populations—Acadians and Mi'Kmaq in Nova Scotia and current-day New Brunswick and, later, Canadians around Quebec. Functioning more often than not as an occupation force battling a loosely organized guerilla insurgency, the rangers were both feared and renowned for their cruel treatment of civilians and captives as well as for the devastation they wrought in a series of punitive, scorched-earth campaigns. By the era's European military standards, the unit did little real fighting, although it did participate in a number of crucial operations during the war—the taking of Fort Beauséjour in 1755, the assault on Louisbourg in 1758, the siege of Quebec in 1759 (in which they figured prominently), and in 1762 the expedition to Havana, where

³⁷Mass. Archives, 73:744. Evidence suggests Indians received less than white veterans, perhaps because Natives could draw on tribal funds managed by reservation overseers.

most of the company died. On these occasions, they served alongside other ranger companies, as many as five or six working together in a corps, as well as with British army regulars. But unlike Gorham's Rangers, these other units had no Native Americans.³⁸

Ambush, stealth, surprise raids, scalping, and terrorizing civilians continued to characterize the company's tactics. In February 1756, the rangers under Joseph Gorham attempted their most elaborate deception. Wearing captured uniforms and impersonating French soldiers and their Indian allies, Gorham and his men sailed a captured French sloop up the Saint John River in present-day New Brunswick to infiltrate enemy-controlled territory, gather information, and take prisoners. Four months later, on 10 June 1756, on assignment to root out Acadian resistance in southwestern Nova Scotia, Gorham dispatched a detachment of Native American soldiers to reconnoiter an area along the banks of the Pubnico River. A small party of Acadian guerillas fired on them. The rangers caught one of the men—whom they killed and scalped—before burning all the nearby houses and crops in retaliation. And on 1 July 1759, during the siege of Quebec, Joseph Gorham and the rangers ambushed a party of enemy Indians who attempted to surprise the British encampment at Île d'Orléans, capturing and scalping nine of them.³⁹

Gorham's Rangers was also instrumental in *Le Grand Dérangement*, or the Acadian Removal. Imperial officials ordered the French-speaking Catholic Acadians expelled from Nova Scotia in 1755 because of their perceived disloyalty and in order to make room for Protestant English colonists. Aiding regular troops, who had been recruited largely in New England, rangers rounded up thousands of Acadians from Nova Scotia and present-day New Brunswick between 1755 and 1760 who were then deported to other British colonies and later

³⁸Gorham attempted to re-form the unit in 1763 (see Joseph Gorham [to Melatiah Bourne?], 3 September 1763, and Recruitment Account of Lieutenant William Barron [1763], Bourne Family Papers, 1687–1791, Houghton Library).

³⁹*Papers Relating to the Forcible Removal*, pp. 296–98; *New York Mercury*, 5 July 1756; Knox, *An Historical Journal*, 1:394–95 and 3:343–44.

Louisiana (where they became known as Cajuns). Some, hoping to stay, took loyalty oaths, which proved ineffective. Others evaded British troops for weeks, months, or years, while still others fought back in a desperate insurgency. Especially in such cases, rangers were employed “in scouring the country of the deluded French who had unfortunately fallen under the bann of British policy,” remembered one witness.⁴⁰

Even before the British ordered the Acadians deported, they lived in fear of the rangers. Uncooperative Acadian families, labeled “malcontents” by Shirley, often had their houses and fields burnt by Gorham’s company. As early as the winter of 1746, years before the actual removals, rumors spread among Acadian communities that the rangers would be evicting them from their homes. In September 1749, Gorham wrote that when the rangers, then at the head of Chebucto Bay (later Halifax), ran short on supplies, they pillaged French farmsteads in search of peas, beef, and mutton, requisitioned sawn lumber to build rafts, and seized canoes for transportation. As on many previous occasions, they also “caught a french [*sic*] man” and “obliged him” to act as a guide. “All ye Inhabitants seem to be mutch frightne’d in being robbed by the Indians” in the company, Gorham reported, and “could not be prevailed upon to Give us any assistance but by [use] of Force.” When the rangers passed through one hamlet, Gorham noted, not surprisingly, that old men, women, and children cowered in their presence.⁴¹

More so than during King George’s War, during the Acadian Removal and the French and Indian War, Gorham’s Rangers operated as a specialized amphibious strike force. Attacking suddenly and without warning from the sea, they assailed communities along the coast and, traveling upriver, struck at inland

⁴⁰Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest*, pp. 140–58; Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, pp. 397–415; *Papers Relating to the Forcible Removal*, p. 141.

⁴¹Gorham, Journal [Fort Sackville, Nova Scotia]; John Gorham to Shirley, 15 November 1746, *Documentary History of the State of Maine*, 11:344; Grenier, *The Far Reaches of Empire*, p. 132. One observer noted that to the Acadian inhabitants, Gorham’s Rangers were “far more terrible than European soldiers” (W. Bolland to Duke of Newcastle, 19 August 1747, and Shirley to Duke of Newcastle, 27 February 1746, *Documentary History of the State of Maine*, 11:314–15, 387–88).

hamlets as well. Using their ubiquitous whaleboats, they descended on an Acadian hamlet near Canso on the evening of 31 July 1757, surrounded it in the pre-dawn hours, and at first light utterly destroyed it. In September and October 1758, the rangers led a two-hundred-fifty man expedition to Cape Sable in southwestern Nova Scotia, near present-day Yarmouth. Ascending the Tusket, Pubnico, and Chebogue Rivers in their whaleboats, they expelled the remaining Acadians from the region. Then, in late October through November, Gorham's unit joined a force of over fifteen hundred soldiers that once again ascended the Saint John River in search of Acadian refugees. Also charged with erasing the Acadian presence from the landscape, they torched farms, houses, even whole villages, killed livestock, and confiscated or destroyed crops. Given the rangers' expertise at water-borne operations, in May 1759, Major General James Wolfe ordered them to row up the Saint Lawrence River on an advance reconnaissance mission, during which they secured landing sites and several strategic points before the larger invasion force arrived in June to lay siege to Quebec.⁴² In the aftermath of one amphibious landing that year, a British officer commented that

at day-break, [Gorham's detachment] got into their boats, and rowed to [St.] Paul's bay; when they came within reach of the shore, they were saluted with a shower of musketry, by which one man was killed, and eight were wounded; . . . before the villagers could load again, the boats were grounded, and the troops instantly pushed on shore, charged, and routed the wretched inhabitants.⁴³

⁴²Joseph Gorham, "A report of the proceedings in the Schooner Monckton, Beginning July 22, 1757," Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. (citation courtesy of Geoffrey Plank); Joseph Gorham to Captain Cathcart, 23 December 1757, Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection, Boston Public Library; "Nova Scotia-Major Morris Report-1758," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 9 ("Aspinwall Papers"), 4th ser. (1871), pp. 222–36. For Wolfe, see Orderly Book, 30 April–13 September 1759, Major General Wolfe's General Orders, Townshend Papers, vol. 7, Northcliffe Collection, Archives Canada; Knox, *Historical Journal*, 2:22; Joseph Gorham, "Account from Isle aux Coudres, dated August 16th 1759, of the Proceedings of the Company of Rangers Commanded by Capt. Gorham," *Boston News-Letter*, 6 September 1759; James Wolfe to Robert Monckton, 17 May 1759, Monckton Papers, vol. 22, Northcliffe Collection.

⁴³Knox, *Historical Journal*, 2:38.

Gorham's Rangers, along with companies from Rogers's corps, participated in the second siege of Louisbourg in June and July 1758. Over five hundred strong, the six ranger companies were still a mere 5 percent of the total force, but they faced a challenging initial assault—a difficult and dangerous amphibious landing, on a rocky, craggy outcropping in Gabarus Bay, in heavy fog and high surf. Raked with French gunfire and sprayed with canisters of grapeshot, a combined force of rangers, British light infantry, and highlanders rowed to their destination and waded ashore. Scaling a rock-strewn escarpment, they flanked several enemy defensive positions; then they poured into the French entrenchments, killing more than a hundred defenders and taking dozens prisoner. After this initial assault, the rangers receded to the edges of action, where they periodically skirmished with Indians, an occupation that made better use of their talents than digging trenches, constructing siege batteries, or hauling artillery, tasks required of those besieging European gunpowder fortresses. Still, their effectiveness was not to be denied. Calling them “savages,” French soldiers fled at the mere sight of Gorham's company. Their fear was warranted. White and Indian members of the ranger companies killed and scalped both European and Native prisoners during the siege. Although British officers were shocked, the governor of Nova Scotia praised the rangers' performance. “I have particular pleasure in assuring you,” he informed the press, “that the Companies of Rangers raised in New-England behaved at [the] Landing so as to do great Honour to themselves, and the country they come from.” He made no reference to them killing prisoners and mutilating corpses.⁴⁴

⁴⁴The total force was eleven thousand strong (Knox, *Historical Journal*, 1:32, 393–94). Forty-two members of this combined landing force were killed in the assault, and twenty were wounded. See *The Journal of Jeffery Amherst*, ed. J. Clarence Webster (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1931), pp. 49–51; James Abercromby to Robert Monckton, 23 June 1758, and entries for 8 June, in “Journal of the Siege of Louisbourg 1758,” Monckton Papers, vol. 9. For newspaper accounts of the assault, see *French and Indian War Notices Abstracted from Colonial Newspapers*, vol. 3: 1 January 1758–17 September 1759, ed. Armand Francis Lucier (Lanham, Md.: Heritage Books, 2007), pp. 80, 87–88, 91, 98, 126.

“White Adventurers Familiar with the Forest”

By the mid-1750s Gorham's Rangers was not the company it had once been. Its numbers fluctuated greatly—ranging between fifty and one hundred twenty-five. In addition, the composition of the unit's rank and file shifted from all Indians in 1744 to a multiracial unit in which whites held the majority by 1762, with Indian participation dipping to as low as 5 percent. In a 1749 petition to the Massachusetts legislature, John Gorham mused over the high rate of attrition suffered by his original Indian unit. The company “was reduced by being taken Prisoner, kill'd, Drowned, and Carried off by the fatigues of that hard and Dangerous service, That there is not one Quarter of said Company now surviving.” The number of Indians shrank further during the unit's second deployment, yet there were still enough Native Americans in the company that in August 1749 Gorham was referred to by a government functionary in Halifax as the “Indian Coll[onel]” and as “Coll. Gorham who Commands the Indian Rangers in our service.” Still, during that period the proportion of Indian privates in Gorham's Rangers dropped from 75 percent in late 1746, to 60 percent in early 1748, to just 28 percent by early 1750. Most new recruits were Anglo-Americans, trained in ranger techniques by Gorham or the other officers. However, despite its evolving makeup, in the first half of the 1750s, periodic reinfusions of Indian men assured that Native Americans remained a core element of the company.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Petition of John Gorham. Gorham's 1746 muster list shows only twenty-two Indian privates in the rangers and the company down to forty-two men total. For the functionary who called him the “Indian colonel,” see *Expeditions of Honour*, p. 141. Gorham refers to sending recruiters to Barnstable County, the company's primary recruiting area (Gorham to Melatiah Bourne, 13 December 1748, John Gorham Papers). Records showing the composition of the rangers and related units are: undated (ca. 1746) muster roll of Gorham's Rangers; Joseph Gorham, “Return of Troops”; “Names officers & men on Comd when took 3 frenchmen.” See also “Lt. Colonel John Gorham's Regiment”; Hudson, “Louisbourg Soldiers,” pp. 60–62; Charles Lawrence to John Winslow, 23 September 1755, and Henry Dobson to John Winslow, 22 September 1755, “Journal of Colonel John Winslow of the Provincial Troops, While Engaged in Removing the Acadian French Inhabitants from Grand Pre . . . in the Autumn of the Year 1755,” *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, vol. 3 (1883), pp. 71–196. For Danks's Rangers, see “A Roll of the Ranging Company at Fort Cumberland,”

Also gone by 1750 were the Indian veterans who had been so vital to the company's early success. Peter Dogamus had languished in a Huron village near Quebec before, his fighting days over, he was redeemed. Veteran ranger Caleb Popmonet, from a leading Mashpee Wampanoag family, was captured with Dogamus but later managed to escape. He never returned to the company. Corporal Jeremiah Queach had apparently had enough of war after 1746; he chose not to reenlist. Joseph Ralph, the whaleboat commander, died in 1749. The most significant loss occurred in the spring of 1750. Captain Sam, already disgruntled that his daughter was detained in service to a Massachusetts household, grew disillusioned that the promises made to him and the other Pigwacket members were still unfulfilled. After seven years of loyal service, the highly valued guide, translator, and negotiator deserted. He led his people back to Maine to live among a related Abenaki band. Then, with his young daughter and others in tow, he removed to the Jesuit mission at Saint Francis.⁴⁶ Gone too was the company's founder and namesake, John Gorham. In 1751, having contracted smallpox, he died in England.

The company's anglicization accelerated when it came under imperial control in 1748. Although company muster rolls do not survive for the period after 1750, other records suggest that New England Indians continued to serve in Gorham's Rangers while at the same time men from throughout the British Empire and larger Atlantic World were replacing many of the unit's Yankee members. The names of Scotsmen, Irishmen, and—the very people the rangers had been sent to displace—even Frenchmen predominated. British-born career army officers now recruited enlistees not at Cape Cod but at Halifax, Boston,

4 August 1758, French and Indian War Collection, American Antiquarian Society (AAS), Worcester, Mass.; and "A List of Capt. Benoni Danks Company of Rangers at Fort Cumberland," 20 February 1761, Massachusetts Collection, AAS. Danks's company seems to have never contained more than a dozen or so Indians total.

⁴⁶Joseph Gorham, "Return of Troops." Popmonet, along with fifty-five other Mashpee Indians, signed a 1753 petition to the Massachusetts government (Mass. Archives, 32:427). The Pigwackets later lived among the Arosaguntacook (Androskoggin) (*Documentary History of the State of Maine*, 12:60, 71–74).

New London, or New York. Typical of these new recruits was Cornelius Cavanaugh, an Irish immigrant who came to North America with the British army in 1740. Living a transient existence over the next two decades, he married and enlisted in the armed forces twice, doing garrison duty in Maine and serving a spell in Gorham's ranger corps in the 1750s.⁴⁷

Few of the new Indian recruits were Wampanoags, as most of the original members had been, but were from other tribes in southern New England. Jonathan Babesuck and John Wom-squam, Christian Nipmuc Indians from Natick, had served under the Gorhams in the Seventh Massachusetts Regiment at Louisbourg. They joined the ranger company after 1746. Babesuck died while enlisted several years later. Abraham Speen, a Natick leader, was a member of the unit in 1747 and 1748. A Mohegan from Connecticut referred to only as Jaquish was in Nova Scotia with the rangers in 1755. Later that same year, fourteen Indians, including Mohegans, Pequots, and Niantics from Connecticut, as well as Wampanoags, were transferred to Gorham's company from the Fiftieth Regiment, one of only two British army regiments raised in New England during the war. As late as 1761, unit officers were still culling Indians from provincial regiments. That year, Captain Ebenezer Marrow pulled two Wampanoag veterans, Thomas Tockanot and Eliakim Nehoman, out of their Massachusetts regiment and transferred them to the rangers. Similar to other Indians in Gorham's Rangers, Tockanot, from Martha's Vineyard, was a twenty-seven-year-old experienced whaler who had served previously in the provincial army. Presumably the rangers did not suit him, for he deserted almost immediately. Four others accompanied him. One was Peter Washanks, a twenty-four-year-old Wampanoag from Rhode Island and likewise a provincial veteran. He was also the grandson and namesake—and thus *literally* heir—of one of the war captains who had led Benjamin Church's first Indian company during

⁴⁷Cornelius Cavanaugh memorial to William Shirley, 6 January 1755, Mass. Archives, 74:313. Another individual typical of later recruits was John Hall, a twenty-year-old mariner and recent immigrant from Ireland (*Boston Evening Post*, 29 September 1760).

King Philip's War. The other three deserters reflected more recent changes to the company: two were newly arrived Irish immigrants; one was an Anglo-American who had been born in Nova Scotia.⁴⁸

By the mid-1750s the company's diverse assemblage of individuals reflected the ethnic and racial mix of the British Atlantic: members of various Indian tribes—some of mixed African and Native ancestry, several identified as negroes—along with various Irish, English, and Scots recruits from Europe as well as Acadians and New England Yankees. This diversity made it difficult for observers, both European and Native, to categorize the unit. For example, a report of intelligence gathered by French-allied Native scouts and intercepted by Rogers's Rangers in 1755 described Gorham's Rangers as the "bad subjects" or riffraff of the colonies and as "white adventurers familiar with the forest." The account mistakenly identified the Native American members as Stockbridge Mohicans who, they also erroneously noted, had replaced the earlier "Mohawks." Perhaps two hundred Native Americans from southern New England cycled through the company over its nineteen-year existence, but the vast majority were Wampanoag; no Mohicans or Iroquois are present in any record relating to Gorham's Rangers. Inaccurate observations such as these, coupled with popular stereotypes, have opened a space for some wildly speculative characterizations. A case in point is an oft-cited 1954 article by George T. Bates, found in the *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, which describes Gorham's

⁴⁸For Babesuck (misspelled "Bathersick") and Womsquam, see "Names officers & men on Comd when took 3 frenchmen," and "Part of Three Companies All At Present Under the Col's Command and Doe Duty in Town," 20 November 1745, Pepperell Papers; "Journal of Colonel John Winslow," pp. 192–93. For Speen, see Gorham, "Return of Troops, Rangers from Nova Scotia." For Jaquish, see "The Petition of the Selectmen of Worcester," 1 July 1756, Massachusetts Collection, AAS. Tockanot served as an indentured whaleman for Cornelius Bassett in 1755 and was in Captain Jeremiah Mayhew's company stationed in Nova Scotia in 1759. Nehoman was an experienced soldier, first serving in Captain Zacheus Mayhew's company in 1758 and then as a corporal in Captain Jeremiah Mayhew's company in 1759, before he enlisted in the provincial service again in 1761 and was exchanged for a white soldier and, like Tockanot, wound up in Gorham's Rangers (Mass. Archives, 33:269–73, 366; 97:140, 277, 279, 470–71).

Rangers as “mostly full-blooded, practically naked Mohawk Indians, with a sprinkling of half-clad half-bloods.” They were “devils incarnate,” according to Bates, “harrowing and hair-raising” to the sedate and lily-white English men, women, and children penned up with them inside Fort Anne in the 1740s. Such prejudiced nonsense has colored historical scholarship about Gorham’s Rangers down to the present day.⁴⁹

In truth, however, race *did* matter to those who commanded the rangers, for they believed that Indians were racially predisposed to military service. When the younger Gorham assumed command in 1753, he redoubled efforts to enlist Native Americans. In 1755–56, he exchanged white rangers from his company for Indian men culled from different New England provincial and British imperial units stationed in Nova Scotia. Noting “that Service [ranging] Can Never be so well performed by any as by real Indians,” Charles Lawrence, the British governor of Nova Scotia, backed Gorham’s policy. The rangers were renowned for their long-range mobility and their expertise in reconnaissance. But they were also notorious for driving Acadians and Mi’kmaq from their homes, taking hostages, and destroying crops, settlements, and farms. These were the “Peticular Designs” for which Gorham claimed Indians were so “usefull”; this was the kind of work for which Lawrence felt “real Indians” were best suited.⁵⁰ Yet Gorham’s

⁴⁹George T. Bates, “John Gorham 1709–1751, an Outline of His Activities in Nova Scotia 1744–1751,” *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, vol. 30 (1954), p. 29.

⁵⁰For Anglo-American soldiers disturbed by the brutality of both enemy and allied Indians, see “Diary of Jabez Fitch,” *Mayflower Descendant* 10 (1908): 187; *Mayflower Descendant* 5 (1903): 242; Way, “The Cutting Edge of Culture,” pp. 124, 131–38; *Correspondence of William Shirley*, 2:466, 553; *Papers Relating to the Forcible Removal*, p. 157. Communications between William Shirley and officers in Nova Scotia during the Acadian Removal clearly reveal this perceived racial preference (John Gorham to John Winslow, 22 September 1755, in “Journal of Colonel John Winslow,” pp. 71–196; Charles Lawrence to John Winslow, 23 September 1755, and Henry Dobson to John Winslow, 22 September 1755, in “Journal of Colonel John Winslow of the provincial troops, while engaged in the siege of Fort Beausejour, in the summer and autumn of 1755 . . .,” *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, vol. 4 [1885], pp. 113–246; Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest*, pp. 49–50, 69, 71, 79, 82). The British were not above using Indians to induce the same fear that French-sponsored Indian raids induced in English settler populations (Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* [New York: W. W. Norton, 2008]).

ranger corps was still assigned these “savage” tasks long after Native Americans had dwindled to a small minority within the company. Later, British observers could not fathom why white colonial rangers behaved so “savagely.” Only by understanding the evolution of Gorham’s Rangers from an Indian unit—expected to carry out “savage” acts because they were Indians—to a predominantly Anglo-American one, still carrying out the same acts of violence, can these responses be properly understood.

In 1747 John Gorham traveled to England and convinced the British high command that his rangers should become an independent company in the British army. Thereafter, between 1749 and 1751, leaders in Nova Scotia created an entire ranger corps, consisting of at least seven companies, all modeled on Gorham’s unit although staffed by Anglo-Americans. In 1749, an advertisement pitched to potential recruits noted that the new companies would “traverse the woods in pursuit of the Indians, in the same manner that Col. Gorham does with his rangers”; another from 1751 announced that a new military contingent would be established “in the same manner as Captain *Gorham’s* company of Rangers.” Thus did the tactics pioneered by the company’s original Indian rangers, then taught to the Gorhams and other Anglo-American members of the company, become widely disseminated among British and provincial troops in the northeastern borderlands—five years before Rogers’s Rangers were formed.⁵¹

“A Singular Mark of the Most Unheard-of Cruelty”

Paul Mascerene, General James Wolfe, and, especially, Lord Jeffery Amherst, the commander of British forces in North America during the second half of the Seven Years War, all

⁵¹*Boston Gazette*, 23 February 1748; *New York Gazette*, 23 October 1749; *Boston Post-Boy*, 27 May 1751. They were led, in turn, by Captain Francis Bartelo, Major George Scott, Captain (and later Major) Joseph Gorham, Captain Charles Proctor and, from New England, Major Ezekiel Gilman, Captain William Clapham, and Captain Benoni Danks. Scott in particular went on to organize and lead British light infantry units (Beamish Murdoch, *History of Nova Scotia, or Acadie*, vol. 2 [Halifax, 1866], pp. 162–63, 190; *Expeditions of Honour*, pp. 82–86).

despised Indians but tolerated them as rangers because, the authorities believed, they terrified enemy Indians and Canadians more effectively than did white soldiers. Although primary sources written by Mi'kmaq and Acadians are extremely rare, their impressions can be gleaned from the writings of French missionaries like Le Loutre, mentioned earlier, and Abbé Pierre Maillard (1710–62). In his polemic against British expansionism, *An Account of the Customs and Manners of the Mickmakis and Maricheets, Savage Nations, Now Dependant on the Government at Cape Breton* (1758), Maillard recounted an episode that took place during a French retreat from Annapolis Royal in 1744:

... towards the end of October, Mr. Gorrhon [Gorham] commanding a detachment of English troops, sent to observe the retreat of the French and savages were making from before Port Royal in Acadia: This detachment having found two huts of the Mickmaki-savages, in a remote corner, in which there were five women and three children (two of the women being big with child), ransacked, pillaged and burnt the two huts, and massacred the five women and three children. It is to be observed, that the two pregnant women were found with their bellies ripped open. An action which those savages cannot forget, especially as at that time they made fair war with the English. They have always looked on this deed as a singular mark of the most unheard-of cruelty.⁵²

Indeed, the incident was one sticking point in the protracted dispute over unpaid scalp bounties. Although the facts are not in contention—the rangers did kill noncombatants outside Annapolis Royal in 1744—Maillard's propagandist critique embellishes them to convey the Mi'kmaq's ostensible ire. The image of the unborn child ripped from its mother's womb is designed to provoke an extreme reaction and, since ancient times, has served to discredit one's enemy as dishonorable and uncivilized. During the war, British settlers frequently accused French-allied Indians of the outrage; most charges were

⁵²Pierre Maillard, *An Account of the Customs and Manners of the Mickmakis and Maricheets, Savage Nations, Now Dependant on the Government at Cape Breton* (London, 1758), pp. 62–63.

subsequently proven to be false. In any case, whether Maillard's report of the incident is true or distorted for effect, Indians in Nova Scotia cited it years later when calling for revenge. Their hatred of English invaders openly celebrated in their rituals, the Mi'kmaq were soon routinely torturing and executing English prisoners. Violence beget violence. British officials in Nova Scotia's Governor's Council, of which John Gorham was a member, offered bounties for Mi'kmaq scalps along with "premiums for dead Indians" as high as £10 sterling. No longer simply a military strategy, imperial violence in the Maritimes during the 1740s and 1750s began to take on the appearance of ethnic cleansing, a war intended to remove or exterminate a population rather than merely defeat an opposing army.⁵³

The enmity the rangers inspired was described by William Pote, captain of one of the provincial supply vessels captured in 1745 along with the Indian rangers at Annapolis Royal. During the trek to Quebec, Pote kept a journal in which he recorded that several Indian rangers were beaten, tortured, and killed by Mi'kmaq hoping to assuage their grief for the loved ones the rangers had murdered. Still, the types of torture and abuse Pote describes were not at all uncommon on the frontier and during this era. Less common was the hatred the Mi'kmaq felt toward the company's leader, John Gorham, whom Mi'kmaq snipers tried to assassinate several times.⁵⁴

⁵³The use of this image has a long history (Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, pp. 81–85, 169–70; *Papers Relating to the Forcible Removal*, p. 149). Shortly after the siege of Louisbourg in 1745, another incident further fueled Mi'kmaq resentment: New England soldiers desecrated a Catholic Mi'kmaq burial ground near Port Toulouse on Cape Breton Island (*The Old Man Told Us: Excerpts from Mi'kmaq History, 1500–1950*, ed. Ruth Holmes Whitehead [Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1991], pp. 110–11, 115). Ethnic cleansing is defined by the United Nations as "a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas" (United Nations Security Council, "Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 [1992]," <http://www.un.org>; Andrew Bell-Fialkoff, "A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing," *Foreign Affairs* 72 [1993]: 110).

⁵⁴*The Journal of Captain William Pote*, pp. 59–60, 62–63, 86. See Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 32–38, 144–49, 233–34. Wayne Lee (*Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare*,

John Knox, an Irish officer in the British garrison at Fort Cumberland, on the Chignecto Peninsula, witnessed a chilling event in January 1759. When a company of rangers, Captain Benoni Danks's men, were sent out to "scour the country" for several rangers and a number of regulars who had disappeared, they discovered that the four regulars had been partially stripped, scalped while alive, and then shot. The Mi'kmaq attack was probably orchestrated by Abbé Maillard, who, since the capture of Le Loutre in 1755, was coordinating what was left of the crumbling Acadian-Mi'kmaq resistance to the British. Whether or not the one ranger's body found was a New England Indian is not mentioned, although according to a 1758 muster list, Danks's company contained at least five Natives. In any case, he had not been shot; the skin on his head had been "flayed" and his *entire* scalp removed, then he was bludgeoned to death. Thereafter the unfortunate ranger's corpse had been carefully mutilated; a "great deliberation was used in this barbarous dirty work," Knox commented. The soldiers at the fort told Knox that they had seen such handicraft before; it was a special ceremonial treatment reserved for rangers who fell into Mi'kmaq hands.⁵⁵

In a final sign to their enemies, the Mi'kmaq warriors covered the body with writing. As Knox described, "the ranger's body was all marked with a stick and blood in *heiroglyphic* [*sic*] characters." The writing on the ranger's corpse, indecipherable to English observers but intelligible to Mi'kmaq observers, was *komquejwi'kasikl*—a combination of pictographs,

1500–1865 [New York: Oxford University Press, 2011]) speculates that Indians' ability to focus their vengeance on the actual perpetrators often led to more restrained treatment of other prisoners (pp. 155–58, 163–64). The Mi'kmaq only managed to wound Gorham seriously once, in April 1750, when, near Pizquid, a party of Indians ambushed the rangers. A doctor's detailed account of treating the terrible leg wound he received was published in the press (*Boston News-Letter*, 15 September 1748 and 28 June 1750; *New York Gazette*, 16 April 1750).

⁵⁵Knox, *Historical Journal*, 1:288–91. This is no doubt a reference to an incident, reported in the *Boston Weekly News* on 18 August 1757, surrounding the capture of a thirty-man detachment of rangers outside Fort Cumberland on 1 July 1757. The report included descriptions of the grisly mutilations (*French and Indian War Notices Abstracted from Colonial Newspapers*, vol. 2: 1756–1757, ed. Armand Francis Lucier [Lanham, Md.: Heritage Books, 2007], p. 276); "A Roll of the Ranging Company at Fort Cumberland."

mnemonic devices, and symbols—an independently created indigenous script, which anthropologists argue predates European contact. Catholic missionaries quickly saw the value of *komquejwi'kasikl*, most often employed in reciting prayers, as a tool for spreading Christianity, and they encouraged its use. The Mi'kmaq having converted to Catholicism in the seventeenth century, French warrior-priests like Le Loutre, Maillard, and others fanned anti-Protestant sentiment among the Indians, which in the 1740s the missionaries in turn used to promote Mi'kmaq violence against the British, a deal they sweetened with an offer to pay bounties for English scalps. The Mi'kmaq did not need such elaborate incentives. Hunter-warriors long before the French arrived, they were a proud people who possessed a keen sense of justice and retribution. Ill treatment of Mi'kmaqs was met with swift reprisal, as were attacks on Mi'kmaq independence.⁵⁶

The ritualistic despoliation of the ranger's body is open to a number of interpretations. It may simply have been a sign of Mi'kmaq contempt for their defeated enemy. However, the hieroglyphs, usually reserved for sacred writings, may have marked the rangers as spiritual Others—the true savages; devils incarnate; enemies of France, of the Catholic Church, and of God. Perhaps the *komquejwi'kasikl* signaled that the Mi'kmaq were engaged in a Holy War. Three months later British troops found the remains of the other missing regulars and rangers. They too had been “cut and mangled in the most shocking manner.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶David Schmidt and Murdena Marshall (*Mi'Kmaq Hieroglyphic Prayers: Readings in North America's First Indigenous Script* [Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1995]) found that the hieroglyphs were not only used in sacred worship but also sometimes for sending messages. Knox, *Historical Journal*, 1:89–90; Prins, *The Mi'Kmaq*, pp. 118–22, 131, 136–37. Many British colonial soldiers also saw the larger geopolitical contest between England and France as fundamentally a religious struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism (see Anderson, *A People's Army*, pp. 196–223, and Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007], pp. 166–204).

⁵⁷*French and Indian War Notices*, 3:233. Thanks to Harald E. L. Prins, of Kansas State University, for advice on interpreting *komquejwi'kasikl*. Prins, *The Mi'Kmaq*, pp. 85–87, 133–52; Erik R. Seeman, *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters, 1492–1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), pp. 55–57, 92–94, 176–77, 273–74; Knox, *Historical Journal*, 1:288–91; Finn, “Le Loutre, Jean-Louis”; and Micheline D. Johnson, “Maillard, Pierre,” *Canadian Biography Online*.

The Mi'kmaq revenge killings testify dramatically to the fear and loathing directed toward Gorham's Rangers and its sister unit under Captain Danks. Almost inevitably, such deep emotions had a lasting impact on the reputation of the British ranger corps in Nova Scotia. Some settlers characterized Danks's company as "a merciless soldiery" and "bloody hounds" and their actions as "barbarous proceedings." The British regulars alongside whom the rangers sometimes served were shocked by their cruel ways. In April 1758, during a mission to remove recalcitrant Acadians from settlements lining the Petitcodiac River on the Bay of Fundy, tensions flared between regulars and rangers over the treatment of an Acadian woman. Lieutenant Knox recorded his eyewitness account of this event as well: "One of the French women, seeing her children seized by a ranger, knocked him down, which another resenting, grasped his tomahock (or small hatchet) and would instantly have laid her head open, had not he been prevented by a regular Officer."⁵⁸

The barbarity of American frontier warfare was especially abhorrent to British officers and soldiers during the siege of Quebec. Enraged when Indians and Canadians scalped Englishmen they had captured, James Wolfe, the British commanding general, issued angry manifestoes threatening devastating reprisals if the practice continued. Despite his indignation, Wolfe failed to prevent his own troops from committing similar "barbarities" against Canadians and Indians. Wolfe wrote his first protest just days after Gorham's men scalped the nine Indians on Île d'Orléans. Lieutenant Malcolm Fraser of the Seventy-eighth Regiment noted in disgust that a party of rangers sent to take prisoners and gather intelligence about French defenses killed two young children they had captured. When recalling the incident, Fraser launched into a tirade against American frontier warfare. The children were, according to him,

in a most inhuman manner murdered by these worse than savage Rangers, for fear, as they pretend, they should be discovered by the

⁵⁸*Papers Relating to the Forcible Removal*, p. 141; Knox, *Historical Journal*, 1:155–56.

noise of the children. I wish this story were not fact, but I am afraid there is little reason to doubt it—the wretches having boasted of it on their return . . . this barbarous action proceeded from the cowardice and barbarity which seems so natural to a native of America, whether Indian or European extraction.

Fraser clearly had little stomach for killing noncombatants, although the highland regiments in which he served notoriously gave no quarter on the battlefield, and some regulars took scalps during the campaign. The rangers, of course, especially Gorham's company, had a track record of killing and scalping civilians as a way of terrorizing enemy populations in order to force them to submit to British rule; moreover, this combined company of Anglo-Americans and Indians scalped noncombatants of all ethnic backgrounds. What was appalling for the Europeans was simply business as usual along the American frontier.⁵⁹

*“Ventured My Life in Defense
of the English People”*

Serving in the military during the colonial wars offered New England's Indian men not only a means of proving themselves in accord with their culture's hunter-warrior definitions of masculinity but also short-term economic benefits—wages, debt relief, and access to trade goods—for themselves

⁵⁹“Memoirs of the Siege of Quebec and Total Reduction of Canada in 1759 and 1760 by John Johnson, Clerk and Quarter Mas'r Sergeant to the 58th Reg't,” in A. Doughty, *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham*, 6 vols. (Quebec: Dussault and Proulx, 1901–2), 5:80. For the extended quote by Fraser, see *Extract from a Manuscript Journal, Relating to the Siege of Quebec in 1759, kept by Colonel Malcolm Fraser, Then Lieutenant of the 78th (Fraser's Highlanders)* (Quebec, 1866), pp. 6–7. See also Way, “The Cutting Edge of Culture,” pp. 131–35; Ian M. McCulloch and Timothy J. Todish, *British Light Infantryman of the Seven Years' War: North America 1757–1763* (London: Osprey Publishing, 2004), pp. 4–11; George A. Bray, “Major Scott's Provisional Light Infantry Battalion,” *Early America Review* 1 (1996), online at <http://www.earlyamerica.com/review/winter96/>; Colin G. Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal People and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Geoffrey Plank, “New England Soldiers in the St. John River Valley, 1758–1760,” in *New England and the Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons*, ed. Stephan J. Hornsby and John G. Reid (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005), pp. 68–69.

and their families. But by the early 1760s, the costs of repeated deployments—death, disease, injury, and captivity—outweighed any advantages of soldiering. In 1749, Gorham noted that during the company's first three years, three-quarters of the Indians in the rangers were killed or captured, an incredibly high casualty rate for this or any era.

The rangers' commander reminded Massachusetts authorities that such devastation "impoverishes that county [Barnstable] in this Province where said Company was raised," imposing on it "a burthen . . . of Widows and Children of the Deceased and those in Captivity." Gorham did not exaggerate. The fifty to sixty Wampanoag and Nauset men initially recruited for the company in 1744 comprised over half of the able-bodied Indian men in Barnstable County.⁶⁰ The small population clusters at Mattakesett ("Indiantown" in Yarmouth), Potanomacut (in Harwich), and Nauset (in Eastham) were devastated by the wartime casualties. In a joint petition written toward the end of the French and Indian War, village leaders explained that "Many of our nation have entered into ye war with the English against ye French and Indian[s] in alliance with them[,] and many of them have Died in ye service & left ye squas &

⁶⁰My calculation is based on the populations of Barnstable County's Indian reservations and enclaves circa 1750. The six largest communities contained around 595 individuals (Mashpee 260; Herring Pond 115; Potanomacut 80; Yarmouth 60; Chatham 30; and Harwich 50), with another 110 individuals living in small clusters or individual households in Falmouth, Barnstable, and elsewhere, for a total of 705 individuals. Because women historically outnumbered men in Native communities and due to other demographics relating to age, we can assume that no more than 15 percent of the population (or 106 individuals) was fit for military service. Gorham enlisted approximately fifty-five Wampanoag and Nauset men from Barnstable County for the initial company in 1744, or half of all those available. My estimates are based on various population counts by missionaries or Anglo-American observers. See Elisha Tupper, "Herring Pond Indians, 1757," MHS, Misc. Bound Manuscripts, August 1757; *Extracts from the Itineraries and other miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., 1755–1794 . . .*, ed. Franklin Dexter Bowditch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), pp. 162, 165, 167–70; anon., "Report of a Committee on the State of the Indians in Mashpee and Parts Adjacent [in 1767]," *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 2d ser. 3 (1815), pp. 12–17; "The Number of Indians Belonging to the Potanomacut Chh[urch]," MHS, Misc. Bound Manuscripts, December 1765; entry for 19 July 1758, Gideon Hawley, Diary, MHS; and *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st ser. 10 (1809): 112–15, 129–36. On Indian women outnumbering Indian men historically, see Patricia Rubertone, *Grave Undertaking: The Archaeology of Roger Williams and the Narragansett Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), pp. 161–64.

children in distressing circumstances.” Others returned home wounded and disabled, but there were no resources to ease their plight. In some instances, overseers sold reservation lands to pay for the support of these needy families and veterans, which accelerated the problem of land loss and the fractionalization of reservation holdings.⁶¹

Few of southern New England’s Indian communities remained untouched by the colonial wars. Native women had long outnumbered men, but now the demographic imbalance became acute, and they were forced to look outside their communities for husbands. Marriage between whites and nonwhites in the region was not only illegal but discouraged by custom, and so Indian women increasingly turned to enslaved and free African males. This pattern of exogamous marriage became the norm in the next generation. These unions produced mixed-race offspring that whites referred to as “mustee” or “mulatto” (although the two terms were often used interchangeably, the former designation was generally reserved for individuals of mixed African and Native ancestry and the latter typically applied to people of mixed European and African ancestry). After the Revolution, especially, when these mixed-race individuals grew into adulthood, they were no longer deemed “real” Indians; instead, whites categorized them as “blacks” and associated them with their African ancestry, frequently denying their

⁶¹Participation in the wars ravaged Natick, just outside of Boston. Jean O’Brien identified almost thirty Natick Indians who served in the military in King George’s War and the Seven Years War (some in Gorham’s Rangers). Many died from disease contracted in the military. In 1758, Indian soldiers returning to Mashpee infected their community as well. O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, pp. 142–48, 150, 156–62, 212–15; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, pp. 118, 128–29; Stephen Badger, “Historical and Characteristic Traits of the American Indians in General, and those of Natick in Particular,” *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society for the Year 1798* (1798), pp. 40–41. The gender imbalance created by losses in the colonial wars is a phenomenon long noted. See Jack Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians: Tribe on Trial* (Ithaca: Syracuse University Press, 1991), pp. 87–89; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, pp. 79–88; Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest*, pp. 30–38; and esp. Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History*, pp. 39–40, 42–59. For the impact on Cape Indian communities, see Petition of Isaac James et al., 19 November 1757, Mass. Archives, 33:10. The severe losses Gorham noted in his petition compare to some of the worst casualty rates reported during the Seven Years War (Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* [New York: Vintage Books, 2000], pp. 105, 240, 244–47, 337, 501).

Native heritage altogether. As such, whites felt that these individuals were not entitled to status as tribal members and so perceived tribal rolls as shrinking. Further, the growing number of mixed-race individuals exacerbated (or sometimes created) internal divisions within tribes. As the number of “pure-bloods” dwindled and with mixed-race Indians often denied status as tribal members, whites questioned tribal sovereignty, which led to lands becoming more vulnerable to seizure, and resulted in some reservations being broken up and sold off in a final act of dispossession. Declining numbers of Indian men, frequent intermarriage between blacks and Indians, and the increasingly mixed-race character of New England tribes after the colonial wars were taken by whites to be evidence of what they wanted to see: Indian degeneracy and disappearance. Reports of Indian men’s courageous service in the colonial wars of the northeast were quickly forgotten, replaced by a narrative of Anglo-American conquest and the marginalization of ostensibly inferior indigenous peoples, who had no place in the emerging nation.⁶²

More than twenty-five years ago, Fred Anderson argued in *A People’s Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years’ War* that service in the imperial wars shaped the identity of white New Englanders not only as citizens of the empire but, more important, as Americans, who were different from the English alongside whom they fought. Peter Silver has asserted, on the contrary, that the terror of colonial frontier warfare, in which Indians played such a significant role, tended to collapse distinctions among Europeans and solidified a “white” racial identity as well as strengthened a

⁶²Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History*, pp. 22, 24, 35–59, 67, 167–83, 197–201, and “Shifting Boundaries of Race and Ethnicity: Indian-Black Intermarriage in Southern New England, 1760–1880,” *Journal of American History* 85 (1998): 466–501; Ruth Wallis Herndon and Ella Wilcox Sekatau, “The Right to a Name: Narragansett People and Rhode Island Officials in the Revolutionary Era,” in *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500–1850*, ed. Peter C. Mancall and James Hart Merrell (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 437–39; Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 215–17; O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, pp. 146, 201–3, 214.

commitment to representative government. In light of these arguments, one might ask how forays into the contested northeastern borderlands shaped Indian soldiers' identity vis-à-vis provincial whites as well as the British troops with whom they served. The reflections of one veteran of Gorham's Rangers might be a good place to begin such an investigation.

John Simons, a Wampanoag preacher from the Teticut reservation in Middleboro, Massachusetts, served in the provincial forces as well as in Gorham's Rangers, where he was the unofficial chaplain for the unit's Native Americans. In 1752, he lost his leg in battle, returned home unable to work, and was reduced to penury. As his lands were being seized by creditors, he wrote a bitterly worded petition to the Massachusetts legislature in which he begged for aid, reminding lawmakers that "[I have] five times ventured my life in defense of the *English people*."⁶³ He knew British colonists benefited from his services, yet he clearly did not feel like one of them. Originally motivated to fight for the English as a cultural and economic survival strategy, Simons and his fellow Indian veterans found that their service in the military reinforced their status as a distinct, socially marginal, and expendable minority. Gorham's Indian rangers played a crucial part in conquering territory for the empire and transforming how wars were fought in the northeast even as they were being dispossessed of lands that were rightfully theirs.

⁶³Mass. Archives, 32:318, 419–21.

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“Displaying the Ensigns of Harmony”:
The French Army in Newport,
Rhode Island, 1780–1781

T. COLE JONES

ON 11 July 1780, a squadron of warships approached Newport, Rhode Island. Only distantly visible along the horizon, they inspired, according to one eyewitness, the “greatest terror” among the city’s inhabitants. Merchants abandoned their stores and shops, women and children barred their doors and hid in their cellars, and those who had the means and the mode to escape did so. As the fleet drew closer, those Newporters who remained in town would have seen the house of Bourbon’s golden lilies emblazoned on the white ensign that flew above Admiral d’Arsac de Ternay’s flagship. The long-awaited French fleet had arrived, but jubilation was in short supply. French officers and soldiers, who believed that “the bare appearance of the French flag would revive the hopes of the defenders of liberty” in Newport, were dismayed at the lack of fanfare and public expressions of gratitude.¹

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¹Count Mathieu Dumas, an engineer and aide to Rochambeau, remembered, “We had at length reached the country which we so ardently desired to see, where the bare appearance of the French flag would revive the hopes of the defenders of liberty” (quoted in Allan Forbes and Paul Cadman, *France and New England*,

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The French attributed their inhospitable welcome to New England's long-lasting adversarial relationship with their kingdom and religion. Just two decades earlier American colonists had enthusiastically embraced what one historian has dubbed an "anti-papal crusade," the Seven Years War (1756–63). As putative subjects of a "Sanguinary Tyrant" and "dupes" of the Pope, Frenchmen, through the auspices of their formidable army and Native allies in Canada, allegedly possessed the power to corrupt and enslave liberty-loving Protestant New Englanders.² Even after the fall of New France, anti-Catholicism remained a potent force. In the eyes of many New Englanders, the British Crown's decision to bring thousands of Catholic French Canadians into the British imperial fold after 1763 tarnished the glorious victory. Influential colonists like John Adams worried that allowing Canadians "the Right of private Judgment and the Liberty of Conscience" would endanger "the Constitution of this Province, the Priviledges [*sic*] of all America." For Adams, French Catholicism was indistinguishable from "civil slavery." To be an American patriot was to love

3 vols. [Boston: State Street Trust Co., 1925], 1:108). For a French officer's first impressions of the force's reception in Newport, see Jean François Louis, Comte de Clermont-Crèvecoeur, Journal, July 1780, in *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783*, ed. and trans. Howard C. Rice Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown, 2 vols. (Princeton and Providence: Princeton University Press and Brown University Press, 1972), 1:17 (my translation from the French, where necessary).

²Charles P. Hanson, *Necessary Virtue: The Pragmatic Origins of Religious Liberty in New England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), p. 1. Ann M. Little (*Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007]) has suggested that New England elites and commoners both shared a strong sense of anti-Catholicism and Francophobia in the mid to late eighteenth century (pp. 129, 191). For the development of English popular anti-Catholicism in the late seventeenth century, see John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660–1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 67–90, and Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 214. Carl Bridenbaugh (*Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743–1776* [New York: Knopf, 1968]) argued that anti-Catholicism was prevalent in colonial American urban centers throughout the period, despite the practice of turning a blind eye to individual Catholics' private worship (p. 135). Francis D. Cogliano has argued that for New Englanders, the Seven Years War was "an anti-papal crusade" (*No King, No Popery: Anti-Catholicism in Revolutionary New England* [Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995], p. 15).

liberty, despise despotism, and repudiate Roman Catholicism and its adherents.³

Nevertheless, when American grievances erupted into armed conflict with the motherland, many prominent Revolutionaries, vocally championing the French as potential military allies, dismissed anti-Catholicism as something British and unworthy of the glorious cause. As early as November 1775, George Washington, commander of the American army besieging Boston, learned that officers and soldiers were planning to celebrate Catholic conspirator Guy Fawkes's 1605 failure to destroy the English Parliament by "that ridiculous and Childish custom of burning the Effigies of the Pope." He admonished his soldiers for being "so void of common sense as not to see the Impropriety of such a step at this instant at a time when we are soliciting and have already obtained a Friendship and Alliance of the People of Canada." Because the American invasion of Canada depended upon support from its predominantly ethnic French and Catholic population, Washington insisted, "insulting their Religion is so monstrous as not to be suffered nor excused." In the aftermath of the French alliance, the Revolutionaries sought to justify their coalition with a Catholic power by painting the French as enlightened, cosmopolitan, and Catholic in name only.⁴

The events of 11 July 1780 appear to support this common explanation of what prompted an overwhelmingly Protestant nation to form a commercial and military alliance with Catholic France: political pragmatism. While New Englanders were keen to accept France's military and financial aid, the prospect of a Catholic army camped in their midst could still provoke alarm.⁵ But Newporters' initial response to the French

³Diary of John Adams, 11 March 1774 and 29 May 1776, *Founding Families: Digital Editions of the Papers of the Winthrops and the Adamsses*, ed. C. James Taylor (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2007), at <http://www.masshist.org/ff/>.

⁴Headquarters Orderly Book, Cambridge, Mass., 5 November 1775, Peter Force Papers, Library of Congress, ser. 7E, reel 3, item 23. See Charles Parker Hanson, "From the Quebec Act to the French Alliance: The Catholic Question in Revolutionary New England" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1993), p. 2.

⁵For political histories, see Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); William C. Stinchcombe, *The*

fleet did not proceed from a still-fresh prejudice but from an honest mistake; they thought that their approaching defenders were in fact their enemies. It had been less than a year since the British army had ceased its occupation of Newport, and rumors had circulated all summer that Admiral Arbuthnot's fleet was in New England waters, preparing to land an army in Rhode Island. When Newporters discovered their error, they quickly returned home and celebrated their deliverance. According to the Reverend Ezra Stiles, "the Bell rang at Newpt till after Midnight & the Eveng of 12th Newpt. illuminated."⁶

Yet this interpretation of the pragmatic transformation of anti-Catholic and anti-French sentiments in America in general, and New England in particular, has unwittingly neglected the instrumental role that both the citizens of Newport and the officers and soldiers of the French army played in bridging the cultural gap between them, ensuring peaceful cohabitation, and transforming anti-French sentiments into—to borrow Mercy Otis Warren's phrase—"the Ensigns of Harmony."⁷ As French soldiers and American civilians prepared to intermingle on a large scale for the first time, Newport became the proving

American Revolution and the French Alliance (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969); and Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Diplomacy and Revolution: The Franco-American Alliance of 1778* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981). For religious and cultural histories, see Hanson, *Necessary Virtue*; Cogliano, *No King, No Popery*; and Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). There have been only two scholarly studies of the French army's involvement in the American Revolution since the Second World War: Lee Kennett, *The French Forces in America, 1780–1783* (London: Greenwood Press, 1977), and Samuel F. Scott, *From Yorktown to Valmy* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998).

⁶*The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, ed. Franklin Bowdich Dexter, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 2:454. In perhaps the most explicit statement of the misunderstanding, historian Stephen Bonsal has argued that "unfortunately there is not the slightest room for doubt that the arrival of the French expedition in Newport was a complete fiasco" (*When the French Were Here: A Narrative of the Sojourn of the French Forces in America, and Their Contribution to the Yorktown Campaign* [Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1968], p. 22). For French accounts, see Clermont-Crèvecœur, *Journal*, July 1780, in Rice and Brown's *Rochambeau's American Campaigns*, 1:17, and Count William de Deux-Ponts, *My Campaigns in America, 1780–1781*, ed. Samuel Abbott Green (Boston: J. K. Wiggin and W. M. Parsons Lunt, 1868), p. 91 and *passim*.

⁷Mercy Otis Warren to John Adams, 15 October 1778, *Founding Families*.

ground for the still tenuous, largely untested, barely two-year-old Franco-American alliance, an alliance crucial to Americans achieving a decisive victory over their oppressors.⁸

*Liberty of Conscience, Liberty of Commerce:
Toleration, Trade, and Revolution in Newport,
1763–1780*

Unbeknownst to the Comte de Rochambeau, commander of the expeditionary force sent to help the American allies, and to his men, Newport was an auspicious location for French soldiers to be introduced to the lived, daily experience of a people quite different from themselves. Historians of New England have long emphasized Newport's religious diversity and cultural pluralism. When the town was founded in 1639, the early settlers, outcasts from the Puritan Massachusetts Bay Colony, were dedicated to building a community in which freedom of religion was valued. As was true with the rest of the inchoate Rhode Island colony, Newport welcomed people from an array of faiths and sects. George Berkeley commented in 1729 that "notwithstanding so many differences," there were "fewer quarrels about religion than elsewhere, the people living peaceably with their neighbors of whatever profession." Newport's small Catholic community resided alongside Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Quakers, and Jews. A traveler passing through Newport in 1744 noted that Newporters were "not so strait laced in religion . . . as in other parts of New England." Compared to neighboring Massachusetts, where Congregationalism was established, Rhode Island could boast "perfect religious freedom" as "tolerated by their Charter of Government."⁹ A French visitor in 1765 noted that "Rhode

⁸Rochambeau's army was the first sizable contingent of French soldiers to be quartered among American civilians. The French troops who took part in the Savannah campaign came in contact with their counterparts in America's southern army but did not interact with the civilian population to any great extent.

⁹George Berkeley to Sir John Percival, 28 March 1729, Correspondence of George Berkeley (B 1347 .A4 1914), Redwood Library, Newport. Catholics were, however, the extreme minority throughout the colonial period; the first documented Mass was performed by the French army in 1780. See Elaine Forman Crane, *A Dependent*

Island was settled first by people Banished from Boston, and was for some years the general asylum for such as suffered from the spirit of persecution that reigned then at Boston. . . . In Boston they are ranck Bigoted presbeterians [*sic*]." This climate of toleration protected not only dissenters who sought refuge but also individuals who practiced no religion whatsoever. Although organized religion was not without importance in Rhode Island, as many as half of all Newporters appear to have been religiously unaffiliated in 1771.¹⁰

Despite the diversity of religious practice in Newport, anti-Catholicism was not unknown. Much like in the rest of New England, Newporters celebrated the fifth of November by burning effigies of the "Devil, the Pope, and the Pretender." In 1766, Newport printer Samuel Hall published a pamphlet that overtly compared recent parliamentary legislation with the practices of the Catholic Church, the Stuart monarchs, and France's King Louis XIV. Recalling to his readers' minds England's religiously turbulent seventeenth century, the author proclaimed, "We have seen the insecurity of our religion under arbitrary power in former Popish reigns; when the Protestant religion was brought to the brink of ruin." If New Englanders were to submit to the tyrannical practices of a corrupt British ministry, they would be jeopardizing not only their personal liberties but the Protestant religion as well. Tyranny and popery, in short, were co-conspirators. Even as late as 1773, Newport printers published a lengthy tract by Antonio Gavin purporting to contain "the most secret practices of the secular and regular Romish priests." This work, *A Master-Key to Popery*, explained to its wary Protestant audience "the means the priests make

People: Newport, Rhode Island, in the Revolutionary Era (New York: Fordham University Press, 1985), p. 3. Alexander Hamilton, quoted in Raymond Smith, "A Traveller's View of Revolutionary America" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, 1981), p. 522.

¹⁰"Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765, II," *American Historical Review* 27.1 (October 1921): 70–89, 75. The number of the religiously unaffiliated most likely reflects Newport's transient maritime community. See Benjamin L. Carp, *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 114, 228; still, even compared to neighboring Providence, according to Carp, Newport was remarkable in its lack of religious quarrels and divisions (p. 115).

use of to delude the people.” Still, Newport printers never produced a deluge of anti-Catholic pamphlets comparable to that of their Bostonian counterparts. Despite the clear presence of anti-Catholic sentiment in colonial Rhode Island, religious freedom, or “liberty of conscience,” was of singular importance to Newporters, and that quality is critical to understanding the cultural environment into which the French Catholic army would march in 1780.¹¹

In eighteenth-century Rhode Island, freedom of religion and freedom of commerce went hand in hand. Situated at the mouth of Narragansett Bay, facing outward toward the Atlantic, Newport offered an excellent harbor for shipping. From the outset, settlers cultivated not only the land but the sea as well.¹² By the early eighteenth century, colonial Newporters were tapping a wellspring of seaborne prosperity: molasses. Sugarcane grown on West Indian plantations and boiled down into that thick syrup could then be fermented and distilled into New England’s trademark intoxicating beverage: rum. A liquor cheap enough that it could be consumed regularly by colonists of either gender and from all walks of life, rum soon became the dominant commodity exported from Newport. In fact, by mid-century, the economy of Newport revolved around this simple inebriant.¹³

This lucrative trade had, however, one intrinsic flaw; there was not enough supply to meet the growing demand. The plantations of the British West Indies were incapable of satiating the ever-increasing American need for sugar. But the merchants of Newport were resourceful. With the aid of colonial

¹¹Some important observations, occasioned by, and adapted to, the publick fast, ordered by authority, December 18th, A.D. 1765 (Newport, 1765), p. 8 (Early American Imprints, ser. 1, no. 10346); Antonio Gavin, *A Master-Key to Popery* (Newport, 1773) (Early American Imprints, ser. 1, no. 12784).

¹²Cattle and sheep husbandry were the early staples of Newport trade (Crane, *A Dependent People*, pp. 1–2); Mack E. Thompson, “The Ward-Hopkins Controversy and the American Revolution in Rhode Island: An Interpretation,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 16.3 (July 1959): 363–75, 364. Crane has suggested that “almost every Newporter was a merchant to some extent” (*A Dependent People*, p. 49).

¹³By 1769, there were ten distilling houses in Newport, according to Richards Pares, *Yankees and Creoles: The Trade between North America and the West Indies before the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 31.

officials, who were less than scrupulous, merchants went first to the Dutch and then to the French West Indies to augment their cargoes. Soon, however, they became dependent on foreign molasses, which could be had in greater quantities and at cheaper prices than its British equivalent. Newport merchants, such as Aaron Lopez, even employed French captains to facilitate the trade. Trade with the French colony of Saint Domingue, whose sugar output nearly equaled that of all the British islands combined, was already firmly established when war with France erupted in 1754. During the latest incarnation of the nearly omnipresent Anglo-French contest for dominion in America, with war raging on the Canadian frontier, Newport merchants traded with, instead of stole from, the French. Britain's navy, preoccupied with destroying the French fleet, had little time to worry about a handful of New England smugglers.¹⁴

The French, for their part, were no less eager to maintain their lucrative trading ties with Newport. Flying a flag of truce, and often authorized by the General Assembly of Rhode Island, Newporters and Frenchmen conducted commerce while their respective armies conducted war. Although such commercial dealings do not necessarily translate into cultural understanding, a certain familiarity had been established long before Rochambeau's army arrived in 1780.¹⁵

¹⁴Frederick Bernays Wiener, "The Rhode Island Merchants and the Sugar Act," *New England Quarterly* 3:3 (July 1930): 465. Lopez communicated with one of his captains, Pierre Rolland, entirely in French (Lopez Papers, Newport Historical Society). Crane, *A Dependent People*, pp. 3, 13. See John J. McCusker, *Rum and the American Revolution: The Rum Trade and the Balance of Payments of the Thirteen Continental Colonies*, 2 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 1:302–35. This seditious behavior did not go unnoticed by the merchants of Boston, who ordered their vessels to seize Newport ships suspected of illicit trade with the French West Indies. See W. T. Baxter, *The House of Hancock: Business in Boston, 1724–1775* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 94. Newport merchants had most likely been trading with, as well as pirating from, the French in the previous conflicts too, but it was only after the Seven Years War that Britain decided to enforce the 1733 Molasses Act (Wiener, "The Rhode Island Merchants," p. 466).

¹⁵The French colonial administration did not condone this trade with New England but for most of the century was powerless to halt or even regulate it. According to Governor Worsley of Barbados in 1730, "the French as well as the Northern Colonies find their advantage by it" (McCusker, *Rum and the American Revolution*, pp. 304, 312). Abbé Claude Robin, a French priest, remarked "The great demand for rum

In the turbulent middle years of the eighteenth century, commodities and coin, not cannons and crosses, defined Newporters' relationship with the French. British enforcement of the Navigation Acts and increased taxation after 1763, however, challenged the arrangement and launched the colonies into a war of rebellion. Most Newporters were enthusiastic for the Revolutionary cause, but this enthusiasm must have flagged when Sir Henry Clinton's army occupied the town in December 1776 and immediately began arresting prominent Newport rebels. One Newporter reported that as many as twenty townspeople were jailed and two women raped. Yet these depredations were probably less troubling to Newport's merchant class than the complete "cessation of all business" that the occupation imposed. Without trade, the merchants, distillers, farmers, and manufacturers of Newport had no way of making a living, and many fled the city. It is little wonder that a merchant who had lost his home and business to the British would rather "loose [*sic*] all the rest & America throw themselves [*sic*] into the hands of France than to return to be under the Dominion of G. Britain."¹⁶

Indeed, rumors of an impending alliance with France abounded in occupied Newport. The British had silenced the city's own gazette, the *Mercury*, but unoccupied Providence continued to publish a newspaper that circulated widely. A letter from Paris printed in the *Providence Gazette* in June 1777 portended the future alliance. The author claimed that "the French nation universally take part with the colonies, and earnestly wish to see them independent. . . . Nobody doubts but a treaty of alliance between France, Spain, and the colonies, will

among the Americans led them [Newporters] to form connections with the French colonies" (*New Travels through North America* [New York: New York Times Press, 1969], p. 17). Thompson, "The Ward-Hopkins Controversy," p. 370; Baxter, *The House of Hancock*, p. 94.

¹⁶Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 2:93, 96–97; General Assembly of Rhode Island to Continental Congress, January 1776, in *Rhode Island in the Continental Congress*, ed. William R. Staples (New York: Da Capo, 1971), p. 54. The merchant had lost "about £3000 sterling by the Enemy, & owned a Thous'd more in Houses in Newport" (Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 26 December 1776, 2:103).

soon take place.”¹⁷ When confirmation of the official commercial and military alliance between France and the independent United States reached Newport in early May 1778, a British officer in town recorded in his journal, “Great rejoicings have been made of late all over the Country, on account of their Alliance with France, which they say is now certain.” Even in a city under martial law, celebrations for the alliance could not be contained. Samuel Vernon, the son of one of Newport’s prominent merchants, wrote to his father, then in Boston, that “we have had great rejoicing [*sic*] here . . . on Acct. of the Treaty with France.”¹⁸

Although an alliance with a Catholic monarchical state may have been a hard pill for Newport’s tories to swallow, most Newporters, suffering under the onerous British occupation, raised no objection when, in the summer of 1778, the French admiral Count d’Estaing’s warships prepared to act in conjunction with elements of the Continental army under the command of General John Sullivan to liberate Newport. Rhode Island congressman Henry Marchant was sanguine about the prospects of this first allied military operation. He assured Governor William Greene of Rhode Island that the people of Newport would at last have the chance “to rid themselves at once by an easy effort, under the blessing of Heaven, of the worst banditti that were ever suffered to curse the earth.”¹⁹ Unfortunately for Newporters, Heaven did not smile on Sullivan and d’Estaing’s exertions on their behalf.

The siege of Newport was a disaster. The defeat was particularly galling to King Louis and the Continental Congress because the allies were superior to the British in both men and

¹⁷The British army shuttered the *Newport Mercury* during the occupation, so Newporters had to get their foreign and domestic news from either Providence or Boston (*Providence Gazette*, 7 June 1777, p. 2).

¹⁸Frederick Mackenzie, *The Diary of Frederick Mackenzie, Giving a Daily Narrative of His Military Service as an Officer of the Regiment of Royal Welsh Fusiliers during the Years 1775–1781 in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 1:275–76; Samuel Vernon to William Vernon, 23 April 1778, Vernon Papers, Newport Historical Society.

¹⁹Henry Marchant to Governor William Greene, 11 July 1778, *Rhode Island in the Continental Congress*, p. 190.

materiel. Moreover, as British lieutenant Frederick MacKenzie observed, “few or none of the Inhabitants have offered their services for the defense of the Garrison.” Although Newporters might well have blamed the French fleet for the debacle, they looked for other scapegoats. One townsman, friendly to the American cause, noted only that a “Gail of Wind . . . snachd [sic] a Very Grand Victory from the French.” Even loyalist Mary Almy, who disdained the French for thinking they could “reign lords of the sea,” reproached the Americans for her predicament. “Cursed Frenchman, they would not have come, had it not been for you [Americans].”²⁰

The failed siege seems not to have dampened Newporters’ enthusiasm for an alliance with the French. When the British abandoned Newport in favor of the more strategically sound New York City in late 1779, the *Mercury*—once again printing—began publishing pro-French articles. The first issue to make it to print after the British evacuation carried an article describing the conduct of “the brave French troops” at the battle of Savannah and an announcement that King Louis had honored Benjamin Franklin with membership in the exclusive Royal Medical Society of France, a matter of great pride for the author of the piece. These sentiments ran counter to the prevailing opinion in Boston after the siege. John Laurens, in a letter to his father, Henry, upon hearing of the failure, noted that he “saw very plainly when I was at Boston, that our ancient hereditary prejudices were very far from being eradicated.”²¹ Newporters, who had more cause than anyone to be disappointed by the failure, do not appear to have shared these prejudices.

Newporters’ continuing support of the French went far beyond published praise. When news reached the Reverend Ezra

²⁰MacKenzie, *Diary*, 2:326; unknown author, labeled “Diary and List of Inhabitants at Newport on board Prison Ship,” dated 27 July 1778; Items Related to the French Fleet, Newport Historical Society. Mary Gould Almy, “Mrs. Almy’s Journal; Siege of Newport, R.I., 1778,” *Newport Historical Magazine* (1880): 17–36, 21.

²¹*Newport Mercury*, 5 January 1780, pp. 2–3; John Laurens to Henry Laurens, 24 September 1778, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, ed. David R. Chestnutt, C. James Taylor, and Peggy J. Clark, 16 vols. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 14:358.

Stiles in May 1780 that another French fleet was expected to land in Rhode Island, the Congregational clergyman, who had fled the city during the British occupation, journeyed to Newport to meet with the Marquis de Lafayette and to assist him in “taking measures respecting the French Fleet expected here.” French commissary officers had already been shuttling between Newport and Providence stockpiling provisions and preparing hospitals, and several wounded French naval officers had been recuperating in town. Newporters were well acquainted with officers of the French military months before Rochambeau and his army set foot in the city. In expectation of the fleet’s arrival, Newporters unfurled two large white French royal ensigns and erected them at each end of the island as a token of welcome. Local authorities hoped that displaying the flags would also signal their allies that the English were not occupying the town.²² But whereas the townspeople had taken precautions to alert the French that they would have safe passage into the harbor, no signal had been devised to assure Newporters that a friendly, not a hostile, force was approaching the city.

*“We of France Ought to Be upon Our Guard”:
Prejudice, Real and Imagined*

Within days of their arrival, French officers were registering not disappointment but relief. When word of the fleet’s identity spread from the harbor to outlying hamlets, Newport’s frightened citizens, eager to catch a glimpse of their long-awaited allies, began returning to town.²³ Baron Von Closen, one of

²²Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 30 May 1780, 2:427. For information on the French officers in town prior to the arrival of the fleet, see Joseph Dupas de Valnais to Christopher Champlin, 2 July 1780, Champlin Papers, Newport Historical Society. As Blanchard reported, “What we saw with great satisfaction was a French flag placed upon each of the two shores which were in front of us. This signal, doubtless agreed upon with the M. de La Fayette, who had preceded our squadron, informed us that the English were not masters of Rhode island [*sic*], and that we would be well received there” (*The Journal of Claude Blanchard: Commissary of the French Auxiliary Army Sent to the United States during the American Revolution: 1780–1783*, trans. William Duane and ed. Thomas Balch [Albany: J. Munsell, 1876], p. 38).

²³Private Georg Flohr explained that the “inhabitants simply had all gone into hiding because they thought we were enemy troops. As soon as they realized, however, that we

Rochambeau's principal aides, recorded in his dairy on the day of his disembarkation, "There was continuous joyful cheering!!! Both by those who were arriving and by the inhabitants, who had been expecting us for a long time."²⁴

After their initial miscue, the people of Newport did what they could to persuade their allies of their gratitude. According to the *Newport Mercury*, the day after the arrival of the French troops,

This Town was beautifully illuminated on Wednesday Evening, and Thirteen grand Rockets were fired in Front of the State-House. The brilliant Appearance of the numerous Gentleman Officers of the Fleet and Army of our illustrious Ally, who were on Shore, with that of the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Town, and the Joy which every Friend to Liberty expressed on the happy Occasion, afforded a most pleasing Prospect of the future Felicity and Grandeur of this Country, in Alliance with the most polite, powerful and generous Nation in the World.

The town council suggested that the inhabitants of each house along Newport's major streets place candles in their windows "to Manifest every Mark of Respect & Esteem, Upon their [the French] Arrival."²⁵ For Newporters, who were inclined toward

were friendly troops and therefore auxiliaries come to help protect them, they one after the other came back into the city." Flohr's journal is one of only three surviving accounts by enlisted men who served in the French army in America. The original document, entitled "Reisen Beschreibung von America welche das Hochlöbliche Regiment von Zweybrücken hat gemacht zu Wasser und zu Land vom Jahr 1780 bis 84," is located in the Bibliothèque Municipale, Strasbourg, France; extracts were published by Robert A. Selig, "A German Soldier in America, 1780–1783: The Journal of Georg Daniel Flohr," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 50.3 (July 1993): 575–90, quotation p. 580. The second manuscript account, by André Amblard of the Soissonnais Regiment, is kept at the Ardèche Departmental Archives in Privas, France; extracts were published by Francis Barbe, "De Lussas vers l'aventure . . . dans l'Histoire de France (II)," *Revue de la Société des Enfants et Amis de Villeneuve-de-Berg*, new ser., 58 (2002): 239–56. The final journal is from an unknown grenadier in the Bourbonnais Regiment. The *Journal Militaire* is located in the Milton S. Latham Papers at the Library of Congress.

²⁴Ludwig Von Closen, *The Revolutionary Journal of Baron Ludwig Von Closen, 1780–1783*, ed. Evelyn M. Acomb (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 27.

²⁵*Newport Mercury*, 15 July 1780; Newport Town Proceedings, vol. 1, 24 November 1779–17 April 1818, Newport Historical Society.

toleration, commerce, and cosmopolitanism, the French army did not represent the minions of a despotic prince come to pilfer them of their natural rights and liberties; in their view the Frenchmen were welcome liberators come to defend those very freedoms. Meeting these lofty expectations would occupy Rochambeau's army throughout its eleven-month sojourn in Newport.

Once the commotion of disembarking his nearly six thousand men, a population roughly equal to that Newport itself, had passed, Rochambeau turned his attention to housing his troops, many of whom were weakened by scurvy and seasickness. Finding suitable quarters for the sick of the army and the fleet proved the first significant obstacle to ensuring Franco-American harmony in Rhode Island. General Washington had foreseen the challenges of caring for those who had fallen ill during the long transatlantic voyage. He dispatched Dr. James Craick, assistant director of hospitals for the Continental army, to Rhode Island to set up medical facilities. Washington trusted that the inhabitants of Rhode Island would "afford every possible comfort and accommodation to the sick of our good and great ally, who have the strongest claim on our attention and generosity." Scurvy-stricken soldiers, however, do not make pleasant neighbors. Apparently Dr. Craick was unsuccessful in his attempts to locate and secure permission to use a building large enough to accommodate the ailing Frenchmen. The French commissary-general, Colonel Ethis de Corny, wrote to Governor Greene earnestly requesting him to provide "an establishment for an hospital for the service of the French army, which is one of the most important articles, necessary to be prepared for the reception." De Corny believed that the College of Rhode Island (later Brown University) in Providence would make an excellent hospital because of the "salubrity of the air; and especially considering this building is situated in a town, the inhabitants of which are particularly attached to the good cause in which America and France are mutually engaged." The college's spacious, brick main hall was requisitioned for the French, much to the displeasure of the president and faculty. Newport's Baptist meetinghouse, Trinity

Church, and the Presbyterian Church also became makeshift hospitals.²⁶

Rumors began to circulate that the French, nearly a third of whom required hospitalization, were suffering from a disease much more dire than seasickness or scurvy: smallpox. Well disposed though they were to welcome their French allies, Newporters recoiled at the possibility of a smallpox epidemic. Reacting quickly to a potentially volatile situation, the American authorities published a letter in the *Newport Mercury* from a “physician well acquainted with infectious disease” who had examined the French sick and concluded “that no Small Pox, Yellow Fever, or other contagious Disease appears among them.” One doctor’s opinion alone might not have been enough to assuage the fears of contagion, but the French sick, who were being fed a diet of fruits and vegetables, began to improve rapidly. Panic soon turned to compassion, according to Private Georg Flohr of the Regiment Royal Deux-Ponts. He recorded that the inhabitants “could daily see the misery of the many sick, of whom the majority could not even stand up and move, . . . they had very great pity on them and did all they could for them.”²⁷

Despite Newporters’ ostensible generosity of spirit, Rochambeau worried that an undercurrent of anti-French sentiment

²⁶The sailors of the French fleet were far more numerous, but they were confined to their ships. See Kennett, *The French Forces*, p. 57, and Evarts Greene and Virginia Harrington, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 68. George Washington to William Greene, 25 May 1780, and Ethis de Corny to Greene, 24 June 1780, *Records of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, ed. John Russell Bartlett, 10 vols. (Providence, 1864), 9:87, 119. The General Assembly appointed a committee to appease the president of the college, who disdained the alterations the French made to the building (*Rhode Island Records*, 9:228, and Kennett, *The French Forces*, p. 41). The Presbyterian Church was used as a hospital for the navy; Trinity Church, with its predominantly loyalist congregation, was most likely abandoned when the French arrived (Documents relating to the French fleet including a Billeting list, MSS A-16, Newport Historical Society).

²⁷Kennett estimates that around fifteen hundred French sailors and soldiers were sick when they arrived in Newport (*The French Forces*, p. 49). The *Newport Mercury* reported that “their chief complaint is the Scurvy, of which they are fast recovering” (22 July 1780, p. 3), and Blanchard observed that “our sick who had the scurvy began to recover; vegetables were furnished them and the physician allowed them to eat cherries” (Journal, 19 July 1780, p. 44). Flohr, quoted in Robert A. Selig, “Deux-Ponts Germans: Unsung Heroes of the American Revolution,” <http://www.americanrevolution.org/flohr/flohr2.html>, accessed 1 May 2011.

might still be present. His concerns were not entirely unfounded. Writing from Newport in early August, William Channing observed to his friend Ezra Stiles, "The French Troops are a fine body of men, & appear to be well officered. Neither Officers nor men are the effeminate Beings we were heretofore taught to believe them. They are as large & as likely men as can be produced by any nation."²⁸ In Channing's praise was embodied a classic English stereotype about French masculinity: Frenchmen were small, effete, and feeble. Yet, Channing's assumptions did not withstand first contact. Face-to-face interaction between French soldiers and their new neighbors would prove one of Rochambeau's most potent weapons against any residual anti-French bigotry.

Rochambeau worried, however, that if the soldiers were allowed to practice their religion *en masse*, as was the French military custom, religious tensions would mount. He ordered that all religious ceremonies for the French be conducted away from the town's center, and he forbade his officers and soldiers from entering Protestant churches during Sunday services. His precautions were most likely unnecessary. Soon after arriving, Sublieutenant Jean Baptiste Antoine de Verger observed that "The people in general are very little attached to their religion." While there were undeniably devout Protestants in Newport, apparently they did not proselytize their Catholic visitors. Verger, in any case, made no note of any anti-Catholic animosity. In contrast, a French officer who landed in Boston lamented that its residents "in general retain their old prejudices." Mercy Otis Warren concurred. Writing from Boston, she explained to John Adams that the French officers "who Remember the late War, (when we Hugged [*sic*] ourselves in the protection of Britain) look as if they Wished, Rather than believed ancient prejudices Obliterated"; she concluded, they "half doubting our Friendship: Reluctantly hold back that Flow of affection."²⁹

²⁸William Channing to Ezra Stiles, 6 August 1780, Stiles, *Literary Journal*, 2:458–59.

²⁹Scott, *From Yorktown to Valmy*, p. 20; Verger, *Journal*, in Rice and Brown, *Rochambeau's American Campaigns*, 1:125; Robin, *New Travels*, pp. 19–20; Warren to Adams, 15 October 1778, *Founding Families*.

French officers and soldiers were keenly aware of New England's reputation. Far from the comforts of home and unaccustomed to the culture and customs of Newport, Lieutenant Jean François Louis, Comte de Clermont-Crèvecoeur was initially put off by American aloofness, which he attributed to English anti-French propaganda. "The English had made the French seem odious to the Americans by their remarks about us. According to them, we were the meanest and most abominable people on earth . . . dwarfs, pale, ugly specimens who lived exclusively on frogs and snails."³⁰ This was an image the British were keen to publicize. A caricature printed in London in April 1781 portrayed Rochambeau and his officers as vainglorious dandies, their hair coiffed, powdered, and sporting exaggerated queues, their faces spotted with beauty marks, and their wrists and torsos decorated by a profusion of lace and frills. The enlisted men, straining under the weight of their knapsacks—perhaps a metaphor for the chains of Catholic despotism—slavishly await the orders of their effete, but autocratic, commander (see fig. 1).³¹

In the wake of London's anti-Catholic Gordon riots, news of which reached town after the French arrived, Rhode Island newspapers turned the tables on the British by publishing articles sympathizing with English Catholics and condemning the backwardness of English anti-Catholicism. Publishers and printers did more than attack the British; they also championed the French. Almanacs, which were a staple of the eighteenth-century American literary diet, regularly printed pro-French anecdotes during the Revolution, something that soon became apparent to Claude Blanchard, one of Rochambeau's commissary officers. In an effort to improve his English, Blanchard read Rhode Island almanacs. In one, much to his astonishment,

³⁰Clermont-Crèvecoeur, Journal, August 1780, in Rice and Brown, *Rochambeau's American Campaigns*, 1:21. Within days of arriving in Newport, the Count William de Deux-Ponts dismissively summarized his impression of Americans: "A coldness and reserve appear to me to be characteristic of the American nation" (*My Campaigns in America*, p. 91).

³¹When the French army began printing its own newspaper, the *Gazette Française*, in Newport, it reprinted many articles from Rivington's *Royal Gazette*; see, e.g., 17 November and 30 December 1780.

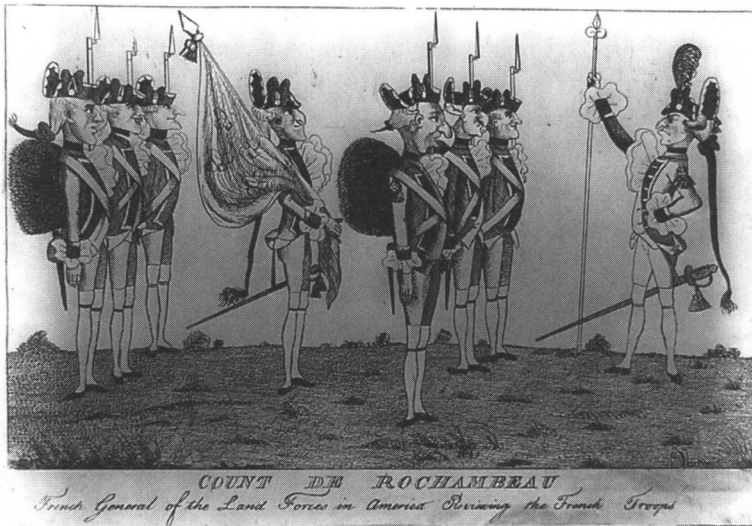


FIG. 1.—“Count de Rochambeau, French General of the Land Forces in America Reviewing the French Troops,” engraving by E. Hedges (London), 1 April 1781, Collections of the Library of Congress, LC.USZ62-1518.

he discovered the virtues of “Louis XVI, ‘Whom God preserve,’” extolled; the almanac also carried “the same invocation upon the king of Spain” but referred to Britain’s King George III as “the sanguinary tyrant’ . . . born to dismember the British empire and make America independent.”³²

Imagine Blanchard’s surprise at seeing the old anti-papist language of despotic bloodthirstiness applied to a Protestant monarch, while Catholic kings were recommended to God’s protection. The almanac, sold by Henry Barber of Newport in 1780 for the year 1781, contains as well a lengthy account “of Humanity and true Heroism. During our late war with France.” The narrator approvingly relates how a Monsieur Thurot, of the French navy, landed his crew on the coast of Scotland. The appearance of the French ships “first spread terror,” but

³²See, e.g., *Newport Mercury*, 2 September 1780, and *Providence Gazette*, 26 August 1780. The Gordon riots occurred in London in June 1780 in reaction to Parliament’s repeal of some of the more restrictive measures of the 1698 Popery Act that limited the rights of British Catholics. The riots, which took the lives of 285 people, were named after the nominal leader of the anti-Catholic rioters, Lord George Gordon. Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 74.

apprehension “soon gave place to admiration inspired by his humanity.” Instead of encouraging pillage and murder, the French officer kindly reimbursed the local inhabitants for the supplies his men so badly needed. The author concluded with the suggestion that “such incidents ought to be held up to the public as examples of true heroism.”³³ The moral of the story is clear: French officers, humane and kind, will pay for their provisions, certainly a message that would have comforted Newporters.

For their part, French officers who chose to read English-language publications appear to have preferred James Rivington's *Royal Gazette*. Although Von Closen described the loyalist paper as “the greatest liar,” he also admitted that he found it “humorous and very sarcastic,” a literary preference that would nonetheless have fueled his fears of Francophobia. Such anxieties were far from unreasonable. During the voyage from Brest, the Abbé Robin, a Roman Catholic priest and chaplain in the French army, wisely cautioned, “It has often been said, that we of France ought to be upon our guard, least [*sic*] at the first appearance of peace the national prejudices of the Americans should incline them to renew their old connections with the mother country, forget our services, and break the alliance.” French officers who served with Rochambeau well understood the tenuous nature of the alliance and the responsibility of the officers in particular, and the army in general, of appeasing American concerns. According to Chaplain Robin, military discipline was the most potent antidote for the poison of religious and cultural prejudice. He concluded that “every Frenchman saw the absolute necessity for obliterating these prejudices, and everyone sacrificed something to his own feelings, in order to accomplish this desired end through their good conduct and discipline.”³⁴

³³“The North American Calendar; or, an Almanack, For the year of our Lord 1781: Being the First after Bissextile or Leap Year, and the Fifth of American Independence,” MS-1995-1-8, Newport Historical Society. I examined almanacs printed in Newport and Providence for every year between 1740 and 1790. François Thurot was a French privateer who regularly raided Scotland and Ireland during the Seven Years War.

³⁴Von Closen, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 45; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 35–36; Robin, *New Travels*, pp. 44, 21.

"The Wisdom of the Commanders and the Discipline of the Troops": The Conduct of the French Army in Newport

Rochambeau agreed; stringent military order was an essential component of his strategy. As he recalled after the war, "the fine discipline of our troops, produced a most favourable effect upon our allies." The difficulty and importance of this achievement should not be underestimated. Although the majority of Newporters welcomed the French army as allies and liberators, they were under no illusion about the character of common soldiers. By 1780, the people of Newport were well acquainted with the eighteenth-century soldier's propensity for rapacity. During the three years of British occupation, the king's men, often inebriated, pillaged, plundered, raped, and murdered while British officers turned a blind eye. Even loyalist Mary Almy had dreaded ill-disciplined British soldiers and sailors. The Continental army, too, occasionally preyed upon the citizenry. The winter before the French arrived, the *Newport Mercury* described how American troops on Staten Island "plundered the people there in the most shameful and merciless manner."³⁵ Such reports, coupled with colonists' republican suspicion of standing armies, must have alarmed much of the population. The average Newporter would have taken solace in the fact that Rochambeau had no intention of tarrying long in town.

The French general planned to undertake a campaign against New York in the fall. Thus he set up a temporary camp on the south end of the island, where his army, cloistered from the town's inhabitants but still close enough to be supplied from the ships in the harbor, could recuperate and organize for the subsequent march south. The town council appointed Sheriff Jabez Champlin and his nephew George Champlin, a prominent merchant, to head a committee that would establish

³⁵Jean-Baptiste-Donatien de Vimeur Comte de Rochambeau, *Memoirs of the Marshall Count de Rochambeau* (New York: New York Times, 1971), p. 55; *Newport Mercury*, 11 December 1775; "Mrs. Almy's Journal," pp. 22–23; *Newport Mercury*, 1 March 1780, pp. 1–2.

a town watch to protect the locals from the soldiery's inevitable indiscretions.³⁶

Rochambeau also did his best to demonstrate to inhabitants of Newport that the French soldiers were allies, not occupiers. His letter to the General Assembly of Rhode Island, published in the *Newport Mercury*, declared that "the French troops are under the strictest of discipline; and, acting under the orders of Gneral [*sic*] Washington, will live with the Americans as their brethren." Although the mere statement of policy might mean little, according to Count Axel de Fersen, a Swede serving with the French army, Rochambeau's orders had the desired effect. In early September, he noted with great satisfaction, "There has not yet been a single complaint against the troops. This discipline is admirable. It astonished the inhabitants, who are accustomed to pillage by the English and by their own troops. The most entire confidence exists between the two nations." Lafayette echoed Fersen's sentiments when he wrote Washington that "the French discipline is such that chickens and pigs walk in the middle of tents without so much as being disturbed."³⁷ In these officers' opinions, restraint was the key to harmonious relations. The best means of guaranteeing that restraint and promoting brotherly living was to keep the two parties at a distance.

However, as winter approached, Rochambeau was forced to reconsider his strategy. The army's flimsy linen tents were scant protection against New England's biting cold, and he had to weigh the risk of billeting his troops in town. If he could

³⁶Von Closen, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 28. There was one violent incident involving a French soldier and an American civilian. A corporal of the Bresse Regiment, part of the marine guard of the ship *Neptune*, killed an American, most likely a physician, on Conanicut Island in Newport Harbor. The motive and the victim's name have been lost to history, most likely because American and French authorities kept the incident under wraps. Corporal Pierre-Antoine Bonichon was executed on 31 August 1780. See Kennett, *The French Forces*, p. 57; Town Proceedings, vol. 1, Newport Historical Society.

³⁷*Rhode Island Records*, 9:159; Axel de Fersen, *Lettres d'Axel de Fersen à son père pendant la guerre de l'Indépendance d'Amérique* (Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1929), p. 72, 8 September 1780; Lafayette to Washington, 31 July 1780, quoted in Mary Ellen Loughrey, *France and Rhode Island, 1686–1800* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1944), p. 34.

maintain discipline and encourage positive interactions between his soldiers and the local population, he might reverse the not-too-distant memories of the Seven Years War and prove to the American population at large that the French force posed no threat to American liberty and property. If this experiment in cross-cultural interaction were to fail, however, the consequences for the Franco-American military alliance would be dire.

Rochambeau chose to move his men into town, a decision that in retrospect proved worth the gamble. After the majority of the French army departed the following summer, Major Daniel Lyman of the Continental army observed that “the most perfect harmony subsists between the French and Americans.” Lyman’s observations are corroborated by Royal Deux-Ponts private Georg Flohr, who recorded that he “got along very well” with the townspeople. For Flohr, Newporters were not arrogant or aloof. “They talk to everybody, whether he be rich or poor.”³⁸

Far from fearing or disdaining their guests, most Newporters enjoyed interacting with worldly Europeans. The ever-cautious Blanchard recorded his first encounter with a Newporter, a young lady who served him tea: “I entered the house of an inhabitant, who received me very well.” Her hospitality seems to have agreed with the urbane Blanchard. The next week, while exploring some of Newport’s outlying areas, he confidently proclaimed, “We lived on good terms with the inhabitants.” Likewise, Clermont-Crèvecoeur remarked, “We were received as brothers rather than foreigners. We took up quarters in town to the great delight of the residents, who lodged us very well.” Considering that he had been one the most vociferous critics of the army’s welcome during the initial disembarkation, this change of heart suggests that elite Newporters genuinely embraced the officers who were their guests. Clermont-Crèvecoeur added, “They took the trouble to teach

³⁸Daniel Lyman to Abraham Baker, 8 August 1781, Mss 546, Daniel Lyman Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence; Flohr, in Selig, “A German Soldier in America,” pp. 580–81.

us their language, wishing themselves to learn French. Few members of the army had cause to complain of their lodging or their hosts.”³⁹

The language barrier was less imposing than initially anticipated. Of course, given the importance of the French molasses trade to Newport’s pre-war economy, some of the town’s merchants were already conversant in French, and those who were not fluent often encouraged their sons and daughters to pursue the language. Judge William Hunter, recounted a story he had heard about his grandmother Sarah Robinson and her sister, who had housed French officers in 1780:

The daughters of Thomas and Sarah Robinson were remarkable for their personal charms and for their intellectual and literary attainments. They had a knowledge of the French language, for which they deserve special credit, as the facilities for education in their time must have been much less than they are now. That knowledge, I have understood, was an agreeable surprise to the officers of the French army, stationed at Newport during the revolution, and led to their cultivating the acquaintances of the Robinson girls.

Margaret Champlin, the daughter of Newport’s banker Christopher Champlin, greatly impressed the Prince de Broglie because “she spoke and understood our language.”⁴⁰

The language differential could also be overcome through judicious study. To meet that demand, the *Newport Mercury* carried advertisements offering both French and English lessons as well as French-English dictionaries for those with ready cash. Latin offered yet another venue for communication. The

³⁹Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 41, 44; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, *Journal*, October 1780, in Rice and Brown, *Rochambeau’s American Campaigns*, 1:18. He also noted, “When we first arrived in Newport, we sensed the difficulty of living in a country where language is an obstacle” (1:21–22).

⁴⁰William Vernon sent his son Billy to Bordeaux to receive an education in the customs, language, and business practices of France (Vernon Papers, December 1781, Newport Historical Society). Anna Wharton Wood, “The Robinson Family and Their Correspondence with the Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Noailles,” *Newport History* 72–73:249–50 (Fall 2001–Spring 2004): 31–65, quotation p. 38; Prince de Broglie, “Journal du Voyage du Prince de Broglie, Colonel en second du Régiment de Saintonge, aux Etats-Unis d’Amérique et dans l’Amérique du Sud, 1782–1783,” in *Mélanges* (Paris: Société des Bibliophiles Français, 2ème Partie, 1903), pp. 65–66.

lingua franca of the educated elites of Europe and America, Latin afforded the French and their hosts a means of communicating. Reverend Stiles recalled a conversation he had had with Rochambeau in Newport: "I conversed with the General in Latin. He speaks it tolerably." Even common French soldiers, required to attend the Latin Mass, had a passing familiarity with the language. Blanchard was delighted to discover an American soldier whose fluency in Latin bridged the language gap, and he quickly employed the young American as his translator.⁴¹

The winter of 1780/81 afforded the men of Rochambeau's corps ample opportunity to study and practice their linguistic skills through interactions with the populace. These encounters were not restricted to Rochambeau's officers and Newport's elite; once quartered in the city, the soldiers were much less restricted than previously. Private Flohr sheds some light on Newport's cross-cultural exchange. Despite the French army's strict proscription against women following the army, he noted with pride that the men of his regiment "were particularly well liked by the girls" of the city. He admitted that his principal motivation for learning English was so that he could "caress" the "beautiful American maidens," who he believed were the "most beautiful . . . of all nations." Two Newport women, to whom Flohr refers as "Hanne" and "Malle," particularly caught his attention.⁴²

Rochambeau's officers shared Private Flohr's admiration of their female neighbors. Count Von Closen observed that "the fair sex here is really unusual in its modesty and sweetness of demeanor."⁴³ The Prince de Broglie was stunned by Quaker

⁴¹Stiles, *Literary Journal*, 2:473; *Newport Mercury*, 23 November 1780, and 15 January, 14 April, and 5 May 1781. The soldier was a Saxon deserter from the British army who spoke both English and Latin (Blanchard, *Journal of Claude Blanchard*, pp. 47–48).

⁴²Flohr, in Selig, "A German Soldier in America," p. 580.

⁴³Von Closen, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 51. In 1774, for every one hundred women over sixteen years of age, there were only fifty-nine males in the same age bracket. See Lynne Elizabeth Withey, "Population Change, Economic Development and the Revolution: Newport, Rhode Island, a Case Study, 1760–1800" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1975), p. 10. According to Kennett, Rochambeau's corps included

Polly Lawton. In his opinion, she possessed a “simplicity and grace that was only equaled by the simplicity and grace of her dress.” Nonetheless, he was just as pleased, as were his comrades, to see Newport women clad and coifed in the latest Parisian fashions. The Abbé Robin noted that “before I arrived here, I had no expectation of discovering the traces of the French modes and fashions, in the midst of the wilds and forests of America. The head dresses of all the women, except Quakers, are high, spreading and decked profusely with our gauzes.” Even Marie Antoinette’s characteristically profuse hairstyle, which was so *à la mode* in Europe in 1780, could be seen on Newport’s Thames Street. Von Closen, impressed though he was, was still confident that when it came to matters sartorial, “one feels sure that the visit of the French army will have its good influence upon them.”⁴⁴

Newporters were undoubtedly themselves impressed by the smartly uniformed officers and soldiers of Rochambeau’s corps. One Newporter portrayed the Regiment de Soissonnais as “particularly picturesque, with rose colored facings to their coats, and grenadier caps adorned with white and rose colored plumes . . . their hair was carefully done up in pig-tails.” Compared to the disheveled Rhode Island militia and Continental regiments, the French soldiers had a distinct air of elegance. Royal Flint, a Newport merchant engaged in supplying the French force, wrote to his friend Jeremiah Wadsworth to offer his opinion of the French military system: “You have no idea with what order & œconomy the affairs in the French Army are regulated. It is a most perfect system. Their officers & soldiers are extremely civil and the best looking men I ever saw.”⁴⁵ Far from the

approximately fifteen hundred officers, staff, and medical and supply personnel (*The French Forces in America*, p. 15).

⁴⁴Prince de Broglie, quoted in Forbes, *France and New England*, 2:41; Robin, *New Travels*, p. 24; Von Closen, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 51. For an excellent study of the social and cultural backgrounds of Rochambeau’s officers, see Martin Lathe Nicolai, “Subjects and Citizens: French Officers and the North American Experience, 1755–1783” (Ph.D. diss., Queen’s University, 1992).

⁴⁵An unidentified eyewitness, quoted in Forbes, *France and New England*, 1:106; Royal Flint to Jeremiah Wadsworth, 21 July 1780, Wadsworth Correspondence, April–November 1780, box 130a, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford.

effeminate dandies of British lore, the French soldiers were skilled practitioners of *l'art de la guerre*. In an era when the combat readiness of any army was still judged by its appearance and discipline, Rochambeau's corps was at the pinnacle of its profession.

That winter in Newport, however, Rochambeau's army had few opportunities to demonstrate its martial capabilities. Count Fersen, one of the most famous courtiers of Versailles, worried that his fellow officers would soon fall into boredom and despair being so far from their mistresses and the excitements of court life. Fersen's concerns proved unfounded. Almost from the beginning, Rochambeau and his subordinate officers gave dinner parties, balls, and other assorted *fêtes* to entertain and impress Newport's civilians, especially its women. These entertainments prompted the grandson of France's celebrated *philosophe* Charles-Louis de Secondat baron de Montesquieu to write a friend in Paris, "You cannot imagine how well the life I am leading suits me."⁴⁶

The Americans, for their part, were not to be outdone by their cultured guests. The penurious General Assembly voted "to prepare a dinner and entertainment at the expense of this state" to welcome the officers to town. Baron Gaspard de Gallatin remembered that "we were frequently invited to private houses. There seemed to be a rivalry among the residents to see who would serve the richest fare and have the largest number of guests at dinner."⁴⁷ The refined and well-educated officers clearly pleased their hosts. Only one day after Rochambeau's arrival, General William Heath wrote to Washington, "The inhabitants appear disposed to treat our allies with much respect. . . .

⁴⁶Fersen, *Lettres*, p. 73; "Quelques lettres du baron de Montesquieu," *Franco-American Review* 2 (1938): 201. "Monsieur de Rochambeau also used it [the Vernon house pavilion] to give several balls which were very fine and very amusing. These were invariably followed by suppers at which profusion and good taste prevailed" (Baron Gaspard de Gallatin, in Warrington Dawson, ed., "With Rochambeau at Newport: The Narrative of Baron Gaspard de Gallatin," *Franco-American Review* 1.4 [1937]: 337–38).

⁴⁷Christopher Ellery, George Champlin, and William Channing were appointed to organize the dinner. See *Rhode Island Records*, 9:175; Dawson, "With Rochambeau at Newport," pp. 331–32.

For myself, I am charmed with the officers.”⁴⁸ After reviewing the French army and dining with the officers, Washington himself proclaimed that “the Conduct of the French army and fleet evinces the wisdom of the commanders and the discipline of the troops.” He took this as “proof of the magnanimity of” France.⁴⁹

The importance of the army’s conduct should not be underestimated. The behavior of the French officers in Newport debunked the common stereotype of the debauched French aristocrat and played no small part in maintaining positive relations. Royal Flint observed that “the French Officers are the most civilized men I ever met. They are temperate, prudent & extremely attentive to duty. I did not expect they would have so few vices.” Even the Count de Noailles, whose hot temper led him to fight a brother officer in a duel that December, so delighted one female Newporter that she told General Nathaniel Greene, “To See [*sic*] Count du Noailles and not to admire him is impossible.”⁵⁰ Despite all this good feeling, refined elite manners and soldierly discipline were not alone sufficient to guarantee harmonious relations; the infusion of French capital proved the crucial final element. As one Newporter so aptly put it, “Money will speak all languages.”⁵¹

⁴⁸The aristocratic officers who made the most profound impression upon elite Newporters were products of what Sarah Knott has termed a “late eighteenth-century culture of sensibility” (“Sensibility and the American War of Independence,” *American Historical Review* 109 [2004]: 19–40). William Heath to George Washington, 12 July 1780, in Jared Sparks, *Correspondence of the Revolution*, 4 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1853), 3:12.

⁴⁹Washington’s address to the people of Newport, 6 March 1781, quoted in Edward Martin Stone, *Our French Allies: Rochambeau and His Army, Lafayette and His Devotion, D’Estaing, De Ternay, Barras, De Grasse, and Their Fleets, in the Great War of the American Revolution, From 1778–1782* (Providence: Providence Press Co., 1884), pp. 365–66; Forbes, *France and New England*, 2:57.

⁵⁰Flint to Wadsworth, 21 July 1780, Wadsworth Correspondence; Mary(?) Vernon to Nathaniel Greene, 13 November 1780, Nathaniel Greene Papers, Newport Historical Society.

⁵¹Newport mariner, turned naval officer, John Trevett made this observation in his journal after conversing with French sailors (John Trevett Diary, November 1780, Newport Historical Society).

“Money Is Their God”: The Economics of Alliance

In order to maintain the discipline Rochambeau considered the lynchpin of the fragile Franco-American alliance, he and his staff dedicated themselves to meeting the needs of the army and suitably compensating the local population for provisions. French soldiers were accustomed to both regular pay and rations, and upholding this contractual agreement was Rochambeau's most pressing concern. Fear of mutiny, perhaps more than any sense of moral economy, was adequate persuasion of its necessity. In order to guarantee the three logistical essentials—food, clothing, and pay—Rochambeau had to dispense from the king's coffers early and often. Lavishing *Louis d'Or* on local merchants and farmers to address the needs of its army, the French commissary department inadvertently reinvigorated Newport's flagging economy.⁵²

As Rochambeau met with Washington to coordinate strategic objectives, the commissary officers were hard at work. Bread and wine for sustenance and straw for bedding had to be acquired in large supply. Local Newport notables such as merchant and banker Christopher Champlin and his uncle Sheriff Jabez Champlin stood ready to offer assistance. The *Newport Mercury* published a request from General Heath, the American military liaison to the French army, stating that “the good People of this and the neighboring States, whose Situation makes it eligible are invited and requested to bring to the market of Newport, all Kinds of small meats, Poultry, Milk, Vegetables, &c. for which they will receive a generous Price, serve their friends, and benefit themselves.” By selling their produce to the French soldiers, Rhode Island farmers would not only be doing their patriotic duty, they would receive top price for their goods. Heath, however, was quick to point out that “the Markets will be so regulated as to prevent Impositions, either in buying or selling.”⁵³

⁵²Kennett, *The French Forces*, p. 65.

⁵³Address by General Heath to the people of Newport, 12 July 1780, *Newport Mercury*, 15 July 1780, p. 3.

Despite these assurances, farmers do not appear to have rushed to Newport to unload their crops. In August, Heath reported to Governor Greene that he found “the French troops in great want of straw . . . about which the general and officers are extremely anxious.” The problem was not lack of supply, for “there is plenty of straw in the state.” Heath placed the blame for the shortage on the seasonal deficiency in day laborers and noted that Rochambeau might detach some soldiers to help the farmers harvest the straw if need be.⁵⁴ Whether French soldiers and New England farmers toiled side by side that summer is unknown, but the ready contemplation of such a plan suggests that anti-Catholicism was not of paramount concern for American authorities.

If anti-Catholicism was not on the mind of American elites, the feasibility of supplying the French army certainly was. Although French commissary officers had been working in Rhode Island months before Rochambeau’s corps sailed into Newport harbor, the French army quickly exhausted the resources of the smallest of the newly united states. Flour was soon scarce. The General Assembly observed that “since the arrival of the army of His Most Christian Majesty in this state, the officers thereof residing in the town of Newport have been supplied with bread by the bakers of the said town, which hath greatly increased the consumption of flour therein.” Although the assembly was concerned with providing bread for the French officers, they were more worried about the effect this consumption might have on the people of Newport. In July they warned, “Unless an immediate supply can be obtained, the inhabitants of the said town will be distressed.”⁵⁵ If this situation came to pass, Newporters would undoubtedly blame French soldiers for causing a run on the bakery.

The last thing French and American authorities needed that summer was French soldiers and American civilians scuffling in a bread riot. Bostonians had killed the Chevalier de Saint-Sauveur, a French naval officer and member of the king’s

⁵⁴William Heath to William Greene, 12 August 1780; *Rhode Island Records*, 9:303.

⁵⁵*Rhode Island Records*, 9:86–87.

household, during just such a riot in 1778.⁵⁶ Acting to forestall this potential calamity, the assembly voted to authorize George Champlin, Christopher Champlin's brother and fellow merchant, to purchase two hundred barrels of flour from the state of Connecticut. Much to the assembly's and Champlin's dismay, the governor of Connecticut, Jonathan Trumbull, refused to sell. He suggested to Rhode Island's Governor Greene that the French army ought to provide its officers and soldiers with its own flour. He concluded, "I cannot see at present how flour can be had in this state."⁵⁷ At this juncture, it was still unclear who was responsible for provisioning the French army. Would the burden fall only on the shoulders of Rhode Island, or would neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut contribute as well? Would the French reimburse the states for these supplies? The answers were not immediately forthcoming.

When campaigning in Europe, the French were habituated to foraging and living off the land. If acting in concert with an allied state and campaigning within its confines, the French were customarily supplied by their allies. Rochambeau's officers soon understood that such a system would not work in America. The Chevalier de Coriolis recorded in frustration, "Here it is not like it is in Europe, where when the troops are on the march you can take horses, you can take wagons, you can issue billets for lodging, and with the aid of a gendarme overcome the difficulties the inhabitants might make."⁵⁸ Had de Coriolis and his comrades simply taken the supplies they needed from local merchants and farmers, there can be little doubt that Newporters would have looked upon the French as no better than the English. In order to avert such ill will, Rochambeau instituted a financial policy that required that all debts be paid in full, either in specie or in notes drawn on France. Chevalier de Coriolis's brother-in-law, Commissary Blanchard, found the

⁵⁶Hanson, *Necessary Virtue*, p. 113.

⁵⁷Jonathan Trumbull to William Greene, 21 July 1780, *Rhode Island Records*, 9:159.

⁵⁸Kennet, *The French Forces*, p. 72; "Lettres d'un officier de l'Armée de Rochambeau: le chevalier de Coriolis," *Le Correspondent*, 25 March 1932, pp. 807–82.

new policy onerous. "The Americans supplied us with nothing; we were obliged to purchase everything and to provide ourselves with the most trifling things." Newporters, however, were not simply being parsimonious; the British occupation had financially ruined the city. As Blanchard concluded, "It is said that it is better to make war in an enemy's country than among one's friends. If this is an axiom, it acquires still more truth when war is made in a poor and exhausted country."⁵⁹ In a pithy summary of the prevailing French opinion of Americans' patriotic initiative, Count Axel de Fersen wrote his father: "Money is their God."⁶⁰ Whatever their motivation, poor and exhausted Newporters were about to reap the benefits of having an allied army camped next door.

With his pragmatic decision to reimburse Newporters for supplying his army, Rochambeau endeared himself and his men to the local population and, especially, to the local merchants and farmers who benefited financially. Remembering the events of his childhood later in life, Newporter John Howland observed that paper money "ceased to pass, as the French Army under Count Rochambo paid all their expenses which were of a vast amount in specie, or in Bills on France, and that supplied the Circulation." The influx of French capital made a considerable impression on the young Howland, for he recalled it nearly sixty years later. William Channing, Reverend Stiles's principal correspondent from Newport, offered an on-the-spot account: "The Arrival of the Fleet & Army hath given new Life to the Town. There is more Business transactg and money circulateg than formerly." For a town that had once depended on its commerce, then been stripped bare by an occupying army, the presence of a large customer base with ready capital was a decided boon. Within two weeks of the French army's disembarkation, notices began appearing in the *Newport Mercury* advertising luxury goods, such as "men's silk hose," to those

⁵⁹Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 107–8. Fersen also noted that "Money is rare, they do not have any" (Fersen, *Lettres*, p. 97).

⁶⁰Fersen observed that "Money is the primary motivator of all their actions" (Fersen, *Lettres*, p. 98).

who possessed “cash, or good bills on France.” Some notices were even printed in French. The firm of Shaw and Handy, for example, offered “du bon Vin-rouge” at a very reasonable price.⁶¹ Merchants thus benefited not only from bulk purchases of provisions and materiel but also from discrete sales of high-end personal items.

The French improved Newport not just with their cash but also with their labor. A number of buildings had been damaged during the British occupation, and others, which had been abandoned by their loyalist owners when the fleet sailed, had fallen into disrepair.⁶² A blight on the once vibrant city, the dilapidated structures offered the French an opportunity to ingratiate themselves with their hosts while also providing a fundamental necessity for the army: winter quarters. After much discussion with Governor Greene and Lieutenant Colonel Benoît Joseph de Tarlé, the senior supply officer, Rochambeau settled on a restoration plan, which de Tarlé believed preferable to constructing wooden barracks. Rochambeau wrote Governor Greene in August asking him to forward the proposal to the General Assembly, and the legislators readily accepted.⁶³ According to Rochambeau’s memoirs, the construction, no small undertaking, cost the French twenty thousand *livres*. He hoped that, after the army left Newport, the rebuilt structures would provide long-lasting, “ample tokens of the generosity of France to her allies.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ John Howland, *Memoirs*, 1840, p. 86, John Howland Collection, Mss 499, Rhode Island Historical Society; Channing to Stiles, 6 August 1780, in Stiles, *Literary Journal*, 2:458–59; *Newport Mercury*, 29 July 1780, p. 3, and 23 November 1780, p. 4.

⁶² Stiles “saw my own House, my Meetinghouse, all the publ. Buildings, & c. Many Houses pulled down & destroyed” (*Literary Diary*, 2:374). Loyalist Mary Almy noted that British soldiers “set 16 buildings on fire, which to me ever will appear like cruelty and wantonness, as it answers no end” (“Mrs. Almy’s Journal,” p. 25).

⁶³ “As by this means those houses which have been so exceedingly damaged by the English while they were in possession of this island, will be repaired” (Lt. Col. Benoît Joseph de Tarlé to William Greene, 29 August 1780, Letters, vol. 15, p. 68, Rhode Island State Archives, published in Stone, *Our French Allies*, p. 219); see also *Rhode Island Records*, 9:305.

⁶⁴ The French *livre* had roughly the same purchasing power as the American dollar has today (Kennett, *The French Forces*, p. 20); Rochambeau, *Memoirs*, pp. 23–24.

The few cultural misunderstandings that received comment were almost invariably about money. Royal Flint found the French to be overly “cautious & precise” in their pecuniary dealings, even to the point of being “slow & tedious.” In a letter to Jeremiah Wadsworth, he complained, “It is exceeding[ly] troublesome doing business with them. Every body I employ grows tired of their Service.” Flint, who was engaged in supplying the French army, attributed the problem to cultural differences: “They expect more than the circumstances & customs of this country will admit.”⁶⁵

If Newporters were not accustomed to French protocols for transacting business, they were equally unaccustomed to French interpretations of military necessity. Although Rochambeau had strictly forbidden his soldiers from damaging Americans’ private property, he himself took liberties that caused offence. Quartered in the home of William Vernon, a prominent Newport merchant who was serving as head of the Continental Navy Board in Boston at the time, Rochambeau ordered that an addition be built onto the house. Topographical engineer Louis-Alexandre Berthier, son of a wheelwright who would go on to become a marshal of France under Napoleon, explained, “Concerned with the welfare of his little army as winter set in, the Comte de Rochambeau had a large hall built where all the officers could get together. . . . [I]t is my opinion that this hall served a very useful and beneficial purpose to the whole army and did honor to M. de Rochambeau, who presided there like the head of a family.”⁶⁶

William Vernon, who had been actively trading with the French since 1778 and who had sent his son Billy to Bordeaux to learn the language and business customs of America’s ally, was infuriated by Rochambeau’s temerity. Writing to his son Samuel, who was living in Newport at the time, William seethed, “I can’t think it polite of him not to mention it to you or write me on this matter—I expect they will make great work on the House if not ruin it. But I intend being fully paid for all

⁶⁵Flint to Wadsworth, 21 July 1780, Wadsworth Correspondence.

⁶⁶Louis-Alexandre Berthier, in Rice and Brown, *Rochambeau’s American Campaigns*, 1:237.

damage.” Samuel had warned his father earlier, “I believe the General takes as much care of the house as the Frenchmen generally do, but it will sustain more damage than a family living in it seven years. The floors will be entirely spoiled!” In the end, scores of officers trekking through the house with their muddy riding boots proved Samuel’s prophecy correct, and William received £135 as recompense for the damage.⁶⁷

Vernon was among the lucky few who received compensation for quartering French officers and troops. There is no record of the French army paying any form of rent to the people of Newport whose houses their officers and men inhabited, and some disgruntled Newporters did not withhold their displeasure. In June 1781, after most of the French troops had left town, Stiles Casks explained to Newport’s tax collectors that he was unable to fulfill his obligation because “I . . . have not Money or goods Enough in the World Which am ready to Swear to before you or any Body—I informed you . . . that the French had my Still house, store, stable 2 men Quartered upon me and will not pay any Rents.” Reporting to the same authorities that he had been disadvantaged by the French monopoly of the town’s best pasturelands, Jonathan Easton explained that he was “obliged to put out [into the commons] part of what little live stock I had and the Remainder almost starved, the French kept there [*sic*] cows and horses in the meadow the whole time they stayed.” Though he was quick to point out that the British—having burned three of his houses, cut 800 of his trees, and left “only one house . . . crowded with British troops for near 3 years”—had been the true authors of his misfortune, the French army had increased more than it had lightened his burden.⁶⁸ As with most early modern conflicts, war had benefited the few at the expense of the many. Elite Newport merchants, officeholders,

⁶⁷William Vernon to Samuel, December 1780, and Samuel Vernon to William, 10 October 1780, Vernon Papers; Alan and Mary Simpson, “A New Look at How Rochambeau Quartered his Army in Newport (1780–1781),” *Newport History: Journal of the Newport Historical Society* 72–73:249–50 (Fall 2003–Spring 2004): 91–121, figure on p. 95.

⁶⁸Accounts of losses during the Revolution, Stiles Casks, 8 June 1781, and Jonathan Easton, 9 June 1781, Newport Historical Society.

and storeowners profited, while ordinary people struggled to provide for their allies in a financially devastated city.

Nevertheless, the French army did provide some opportunities for non-elite Newporters. The commissary department employed sailors, wagoners, drivers, cooks, butchers, carpenters, wheelwrights, and countless others in supporting roles. Men such as Nathaniel Campfield, John Adam, and Gabriel Penney hired out their services to the French army for the impending march south.⁶⁹ Although the compensation these men received for their labor has been lost to history, the French no doubt provided greater incentives than the numerous Continental army recruiters lurking around Newport in the vain hope of bringing their regiments to full strength. For those men who had been deprived of employment by the British occupation, steady pay in hard currency must have been a welcome alternative to military service.

In June 1781, with a veritable battalion of Newporters in tow, the French army made ready to quit the town. In marked contrast to their inauspicious entry, they were sent off with all the fanfare of an allied army on the march to victory. The excitement of the departure was tinged with melancholy for the officers and soldiers as well as for their Newport hosts. Berthier summarized the experience best when he wrote, "The whole army had spent a delightful winter in Newport, and as each man got the word and prepared to leave, the pleasures ceased and gave way to regrets in which the whole town joined, especially the women." For a few soldiers, these regrets must have been too much to bear. When his army marched out of Newport, Rochambeau reported that "ten love-sick soldiers of Soissonnais who returned to see their sweethearts [*maîtresses*]" had not rejoined their regiment. This occurrence is particularly telling given that throughout the French army's sojourn

⁶⁹Americans, however, were strictly prohibited from enlisting in the French army as soldiers. A list of hundreds of Americans employed by the French army in preparation for the march to Yorktown, most of them men from Newport or the immediate surroundings, is held by the New-York Historical Society. See Kenneth Scott, "Rochambeau's American Wagoners, 1780-1783," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 143 (July 1989): 256-62.

in Newport, desertion had been negligible. Clearly, the officers and soldiers of Rochambeau's corps viewed Newporters favorably, and the reverse appears equally true. Mary Robinson, one of Newport's Quaker "belles" of whom many a French officer panegyricized, claimed that it would "be impossible ever to forget" the "pleasing impressions" the French army had made.⁷⁰ These Frenchmen had crossed the Atlantic prepared to face prejudice and xenophobia, but instead they found hospitality and friendship among the population of the New England port city.



In the months following the departure of Rochambeau's corps, the people of Newport continued to express their approbation for the men of the French expedition. Following the victory at Yorktown, Governor Greene and the General Assembly applauded the count "for the great and eminent services rendered since [his] first arrival in this State." Rochambeau, skilled in the language of diplomacy, replied by thanking the people of Rhode Island for "the friendly behavior of its inhabitants . . . at our arrival here."⁷¹ He and his army must have been on the minds of Rhode Island's General Assemblymen in 1783, when, as American, French, and British diplomats were meeting in Paris to negotiate a treaty that would guarantee American independence, the legislators voted to bestow on Roman Catholics "all the Rights and privileges of the Protestant Citizens of this State." No doubt this was pleasing news for Newport's small, but resolute, community of Catholics who, later bolstered by émigrés escaping revolution in France and Saint Domingue, continued to openly practice their religion.⁷²

⁷⁰Rice and Brown, *Rochambeau's American Campaigns*, 1:245; Rochambeau to Barras, quoted in Scott, *From Yorktown to Valmy*, p. 55; Kennett, *The French Forces in America*, pp. 85–86; Mary Robinson to the Count de Noailles, 25 June 1781, Robinson Family Correspondence.

⁷¹Rochambeau, quoted in Forbes, *France and New England*, 1:167, 168.

⁷²Loughrey, *France and Rhode Island*, 1686, p. 37; Patrick Conley and Matthew Smith, *Catholicism in Rhode Island: The Formative Era* (Providence: Diocese of Providence, 1976), pp. 12–19.

With the British navy no longer prowling New England waters, Newport merchants resumed their business with their counterparts in the French West Indies and increasingly with merchants in metropolitan France as well. In 1783 the assembly passed a bill that lowered the tax on French wine from three shillings to one per gallon and from one shilling to none on French West Indian rum.⁷³ The legislation was a boon for Newport merchants, who were facing a post-war recession.

Several years later, amid the turmoil of Revolutionary France, Newporters continued to trade with their old allies. Christopher Champlin, who had worked so tirelessly to see to the needs of Rochambeau's men, encouraged his son, Christopher Grant Champlin, to cross the Atlantic in 1790 to act as a liaison between the merchants of Bordeaux and Champlin's firm.⁷⁴ And during that same period in Newport, William Adancourt, who had worked with the French commissary department to provide food and forage for Rochambeau's army, placed an advertisement in the *Newport Mercury* informing subscribers "that he continues to teach the French Language" to "those desirous of learning that polite and beneficial language."⁷⁵

While the author of an article in the *Pennsylvania Ledger* had worried in 1778 that the Franco-American military alliance would lead to the "universal re-establishment of Popery throughout all Christendom" and the *Royal Gazette* had proclaimed upon hearing of their arrival that Rochambeau's men would bring about the "establishment of a French government, laws, customs, &c. &c. ever abhorrent of the sour and turbulent Puritans," the example of quartering the army among the inhabitants of Newport proved to all but the most ardent loyalists that the French posed no threat to American liberties or the Protestant religion.⁷⁶ As Continental army surgeon James Thatcher

⁷³"An Act laying certain Duties of Excise upon certain Articles herein mentioned for the purpose of paying the annual Interest arising upon the Public Securities of this State, and for raising a Revenue for the Support of the Government thereof," February 1783, Newport Historical Society.

⁷⁴Withey, "Population Change, Economic Development and the Revolution," p. 186.

⁷⁵*Newport Mercury*, 20 September 1790.

⁷⁶*Pennsylvania Ledger*, 13 May 1778, and *New-York Royal Gazette*, 15 July 1780.

remarked, the conduct of Rochambeau's troops "must have a happy tendency to eradicate from the minds of the Americans their ancient prejudices against the French people."⁷⁷ Through their good order and strict discipline, the French soldiers maintained cordial relations with the people of Newport. Along with this soldierly decorum, the refined demeanor of the officers and generous spending from the French treasury were enough to overcome any lingering anti-French prejudices. Nevertheless, without Newport's preexisting commercial experience with the French West Indies, its tradition of religious toleration, and the economic depression brought on by British occupation, the French presence may have been less than harmonious. Only the combination of these factors can fully explain the peaceful habitation of a Catholic army in Protestant New England.

⁷⁷James Thatcher, *A Military Journal of the American Revolution* (Hartford, Conn.: Hurlbut, Williams and Company, 1862), p. 266.

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“One Language in Prayer”: Evangelicalism,
Anti-Catholicism, and Harriet Beecher
Stowe’s *The Minister’s Wooing*

NEIL MEYER

IN 1832, Harriet Beecher left her home in Litchfield, Connecticut, and along with other members of her family followed her father, Lyman, to Cincinnati, Ohio. Reverend Beecher, who was being installed as the first president of Lane Theological Seminary, was concerned that the western territories, with their heterogeneous populations and influx of immigrants, were vulnerable to undue Catholic influence. If the “cheap and effectual education of the children of our nation” were neglected, he warned in *A Plea for the West*, “the Catholic powers of Europe intend to make up the deficiency,” until, by the “powerful action of foreign influence and intrigue,” America’s Protestant religion and republican liberties were destroyed.¹ Twenty years later, Lyman’s son Edward sounded the same alarm in his *The Papal Conspiracy Exposed, and Protestantism Defended, in the Light of Reason, History, and Scripture* (1855). Rome “is organizing seductive and proselyting [*sic*] systems of education,” he cautioned, “and aims by means of them to corrupt and enlist in their vast schemes the children of Protestant parents.”²

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¹Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* (Cincinnati: Truman and Smith, 1835), p. 165.

²Edward Beecher, *The Papal Conspiracy Exposed, and Protestantism Defended, in the Light of Reason, History, and Scripture* (Boston: Stearns and Co., 1855), p. 15.

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In December 1858, Harriet Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing* began appearing serially in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Although the novel is generally examined for the ways in which Stowe distances herself from New England Calvinism, less attention has been paid to how it engages with her father's, her brother's, and her era's anti-Catholicism, particularly insofar as it is involved with education and, especially, female education. The convent, or nunnery, became for detractors like the Reverends Stowe the site of seduction, where emotionally vulnerable young women could be lured into error by means of ecstatic religious practices. In leveling that charge at the Catholic Church, the Stowes and others sought to recover for mainstream Protestantism a clear-headed rationality they felt had been threatened by the emotional excesses of the Second Great Awakening. In her sentimental novel set in eighteenth-century Newport, Rhode Island, Harriet reverses that process, using emotion as a means to bridge the gap between the old-time New England religion, its evangelical manifestations, and the progenitor of both, the Roman Catholic Church.



Writing to his daughter Catharine as she shepherded a revival at her Hartford Female Seminary in 1826, Lyman Beecher cautioned, "The very high state of excited feeling, though extremely natural among young Christians, and powerful in its effects while it lasts, is too hazardous to health to be indulged, and necessarily too short-lived to answer in the best manner the purpose of advancing a revival." He urged her instead to encourage a state "which does not ruffle the passions, and is compatible with the most cool and collected state of mind, both for planning and for action, and, at the same time, predisposes for earnest prayer, and for speaking to stupid and awakened sinners a word in season."³ In a letter to Edward that same year, Lyman modeled the proper response to religious renewal

³*The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher* (1864), ed. Barbara M. Cross (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 44.

when he praised his congregation for being “so full and solemn” during a revival.⁴

Traditional criticisms of contemporary revivals—their “false conversions,” theatricality, and “spiritual delusion”—were amply set forth by Presbyterian minister and theologian John Williamson Nevin (1803–86) in his 1843 tract *The Anxious Bench*.⁵ The title refers to the revival technique of calling forth those “anxious” about their spiritual state, separating them from the converted so that they might be more immediate and visual objects of the prayers and interventions of the congregation. Nevin saw the bench as, for Protestants, an ominously ritualistic event. The anxious bench might save souls, but to Nevin such public performances and the emotional responses they were intended to elicit, despite their popularity and efficacy, had revived not true faith but the excesses of the Catholic Church: “The Romish Church has always delighted in arrangements and services, animated with the same false spirit. In her penitential system, all pains have been taken to produce *effect* by means of outward postures and dress, till in the end, amid the solemn mummary, no room has been left for genuine penitence at all.”⁶

Also troubled by the ramifications of religious enthusiasm was the influential Hartford pastor Horace Bushnell. He shared his reservations in his *Christian Nurture* (1847). Examining the underlying ideology of revivalism, which he insists is predicated on “extreme individualism,” he worries that “conversion is nearly everything with us.” The danger is that “we idolize such scenes, and make them the whole of our religion. We assume that nothing good is doing, or can be done at any other time. And what is even worse, we often look upon these scenes, and desire them, rather as scenes of victory than of piety.” Piety, Bushnell contends, is nurtured not in the theater of the revival but in the Christian home, where loving parents restore discipline and return privacy and moderation to daily Christian

⁴Beecher, *Autobiography*, p. 45.

⁵John Williamson Nevin, *The Anxious Bench: A Tract for the Times* (Chambersburg, Pa.: Weekly Messenger, 1843), p. 23.

⁶Nevin, *The Anxious Bench*, p. 14.

life. Much like Nevin, Bushnell contrasts the “domestic godliness” he advocates with Catholicism, specifically monasticism: “Hence, it is that monks have been so prone to persecution. Not dwelling with children as the objects of affection, having their hearts softened by no family love, their life identified with no objects that excite gentleness, their nature hardens into a Christian abstraction, and blood and doctrine go together.”⁷

As these passages from the Beechers, Nevin, and Bushnell illustrate, in displacing their rejection of religious enthusiasm onto the practices and spaces of the Catholic Church, mainstream Protestant clergymen reveal that the institutionalization of evangelicalism helped fuel, for all its complexity, antebellum anti-Catholic sermonizing. Perry Miller has explained that “New Englanders had been severely scarred by criticisms of the First Awakening . . . and were resolved never again to let emotions get so out of control as to provoke ridicule.”⁸ Moving toward a more institutional, less emotionally rich, process of Christianizing the American people, wary Protestant leaders identified Catholics and Catholic converts as practitioners of an affective ritualism they were actively trying to disavow.

With increased immigration and state-sponsored extensions of the franchise, Catholicism loomed as a threat, as Lyman Beecher and others saw it, not only to Protestant religious practice but to Protestant political hegemony and sovereignty in the rapidly expanding United States. A particular cause for concern was Edward Dominic Fenwick, who had been consecrated the first bishop of the new diocese of Cincinnati in 1822. Given his proximity, Beecher would have been particularly alert to Fenwick’s influence. In his *A Plea for the West*, however, Beecher demonstrated that the Protestants of Boston were just as concerned as those of Cincinnati. Quoting from the *Quarterly Register* of 1830, he drew the battle lines:

“The missions of America are of high importance to the church. The superabundant population of ancient Europe is flowing toward the

⁷Horace Bushnell, *Christian Nurture* (1847; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 47, 21, 47, 98, 48.

⁸Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America, from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1965), p. 6.

United States. Each one arrives, not with his religion, but with his indifference. The greater part are disposed to embrace the doctrine, whatever it may be, which is first preached to them. We must make haste; the moments are precious. America may one day become the centre of civilization; and shall truth or error establish there its empire? If the Protestant sects are beforehand with us, it will be difficult to destroy their influence."

And yet, as the editor of the *Register* is quick to point out, Protestants must never drop their guard:

"‘Mgr. Fenwick,’ adds the editor, ‘is laboring with an admirable zeal to combat this influence of the Protestant sects in the mission entrusted to him. Numerous conversions have already crowned his efforts; and he has even been able to establish a convent, all the nuns of which are Protestants, who have abjured their former faith.’"⁹

To further his efforts, Bishop Fenwick had solicited Europe in 1829 to help support the growth of Catholicism in the United States. In response, the Leopold Association, an Austro-Hungarian charitable organization, was founded to send funds to struggling U.S. parishes; and beginning in 1832, the Association for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons, France, also lent financial support.¹⁰

With backsliders and unbelievers in contention and foreign influence on the rise, the scene was set for sensational dramas of victimization. Perhaps no one was more expert at this kind of manipulative storytelling than Samuel B. Smith. An ex-priest who became a minor celebrity, Smith was best known for his magazine *The Downfall of Babylon; or, the Triumph of Truth over Popery* (published out of New York City), which, along with his books and pamphlets, set the standard for the heated, gothic rhetoric that would define much anti-Catholic discourse. Although sometimes attuned to doctrinal and political disputes, Smith's greater interest lay

⁹Beecher, *A Plea for the West*, pp. 111–12.

¹⁰Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 121.

in the private and often sexual corruptions of the Catholic Church.

After explaining his own relationship to Catholicism, Smith devotes most of the first four issues of *The Downfall* to his experiences with nunneries, in particular the convent at Bardstown, Kentucky, where he was a confessor. Drawing on tropes popularized in eighteenth-century gothic novels, Smith constructs the convent as a women's prison, a site for irrational and dangerous sentiment, the sentiment gone awry that Protestant leaders seek to deflect from evangelicalism and project onto the Catholic Church, specifically women within the Church.

In his discussion of sympathy as it was understood in the eighteenth century, David Marshall turns to Denis Diderot's *La Religieuse* (written in 1760 but not published until 1796), in which Suzanna Simonin, the heroine, discovers that in moments of sympathetic identification, she falls prey to seduction, most shockingly, with the mother superior of Saint-Eutrope. The novel, Marshall comments, thus "raises the possibility that the effects of sympathy might be disturbingly similar to the effects of seduction."¹¹ Although Marshall is not particularly concerned with its anti-Catholic implications, *La Religieuse*, like Anne Radcliffe's *The Italian* and Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, exposes the Protestant anxiety that the private, intimate spaces of Catholicism—spaces like the convent and the confessional—are sites where the most vile corruptions of mind, spirit, and body may be perpetrated.

Convents were of special concern because they were educational as well as religious establishments. Across the country, though mostly in New England and along the eastern seaboard, wealthy Protestants found that nuns offered a better education than could be had elsewhere. The Ursuline Convent at Mount Benedict, in Charlestown, Massachusetts, had established a school in 1820 that attracted elite families in the Boston area. In the summer of 1834, however, gossip about a mysterious

¹¹David Marshall, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelly* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 86.

woman who had escaped the convent spread quickly and incited citizens, particularly working-class Scotch Presbyterians, to invade the convent and, ultimately (though perhaps unintentionally), destroy it.¹²

The next year Rebecca Reed, a Protestant who had entered the Ursuline Convent in 1831 as a charity case, issued her *Six Months in a Convent*. Her publisher appended to it a long preface intended to situate Reed's "true" narrative within larger questions about young women's education, specifically, "how the future ornaments to our most refined society, the future accomplished mothers of American citizens, shall be educated."¹³ It was a question of great importance to Harriet Beecher Stowe, who had been enrolled in her sister Catharine's Hartford Female Seminary. For readers who might wonder why a Protestant woman would choose to enter not a seminary but a convent, Reed laments that she was bereft of maternal advice and sympathy. Reed, living alone with her father after her mother has died, is approached by the family's domestic, Miss H., to keep her in service. Miss H., Reed explains, "found me in great trouble and grief, in consequence of the absence of my two younger sisters, whom I very dearly loved, and who had gone to reside with my sisters in Boston."¹⁴ In a home devoid of female sympathy and community, Reed happens upon Miss H. praying over her rosary and yields to her fascination with the foreign rite. It is a scene Stowe will enact to quite different effect in *The Minister's Wooing*.



The Minister's Wooing centers on the Scudder family, Mary and her mother, and the real-life minister Samuel Hopkins,

¹²For a full narrative of the conflict and a reading of events in terms of class tensions surrounding the alignment of wealthy Protestants and Catholics against working-class Protestants, see Nancy Lusignan Shultz, *Fire and Roses: The Burning of the Charlestown Convent, 1834* (New York: Free Press, 2000).

¹³Rebecca Theresa Reed, *Six Months in a Convent and Supplement* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), pp. 6–7.

¹⁴Reed, *Six Months in a Convent*, pp. 52–53.

who boards with them. Hopkins is wooed twice over: first to the cause of abolition and, second, by the charms of young Mary Scudder, who agrees to marry him after she learns that her true love, James Marvyn, has died at sea. This loss animates the plot, not only because it opens the possibility of Mary's betrothal to Hopkins but because the grief it prompts elicits differing responses to Calvinist promises of salvation. Threaded through this primary action is what Susan K. Harris calls the novel's "minor plot," that involving the intimate friendship between Mary and the Catholic Virginie de Frontignac.¹⁵

Virginie enters the Scudders' home in the company of Aaron Burr, who is visiting the Newport area, as well as her husband and the Abbé Léfon, who has been engaged to tutor Mary in French. But Virginie, charmed by Mary, discharges the cleric from his responsibilities and volunteers to teach Mary herself. Thus Stowe introduces the key Catholic institution that she plans to rescue from the anti-Catholic tradition and recuperate. In the relationship between Catholic Virginie and Puritan Mary, the novel imagines an ecumenical community of feeling, one structured around the motif of the convent (wherein the interfaith education of women transpires), now reconfigured as the New England home.

As Virginie regularly visits the Scudder home, a reciprocal relationship, one based not only in education but also in affection, binds her to Mary. Mutually improving one another, Mary absorbs, but only insofar as appropriate, the refinements of Old World European Catholicism, while Virginie learns to appreciate the modesty and resolve New World Protestantism has fostered among New England's women. Virginie's own refinement was the product of a convent education. But although she had been sent to the convent after her mother died, she experienced none of the horrors to which Rebecca Reed had succumbed in her brief six months in the Catholic heart of darkness. Instead, Virginie felt embraced, as by a family: "the sisters loved me, and I loved them; and I used to be so pious,

¹⁵Susan K. Harris, "The Female Imaginary in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing*," *New England Quarterly* 66.2 (1993): 182.

and loved God dearly.”¹⁶ Convent life had been the pinnacle of Virginie’s life, an ideal time in which she believed herself to have been most loved and most holy. In a reversal of anti-Catholic screeds and tales, it is not Virginie’s sojourn within the convent but her departure from it, when she reenters the world through marriage, that introduces the threat of seduction. She can reclaim her happy memories—and her safety—only when she and Mary come together in the convent-like setting of the Scudder home, where together they indulge in the skills—art, French, needlework, reading—that persuaded certain wealthy Protestants to choose a convent education for their daughters. Even Miss Prissy, a family friend who harbors her own prejudices against Catholics, wishes that Virginie could impart to her her formidable talents with a needle.

Stowe prizes the convent as a space for female work and creativity even more explicitly in her 1862 novel *Agnes of Sorrento*, which takes place in Italy during the tumultuous era of Alexander VI’s papacy (1492–1503). As the narrator comments, “Convents in the Middle Ages were the retreats of multitudes of different natures, who did not wish to live in a state of perpetual warfare and offence, and all the elegant arts flourished under their protecting shadows.”¹⁷ In offering a retreat from the barbarities of medieval Europe, the convent was particularly valuable for women. The narrator explains:

If the destiny of woman is a problem that calls for grave attention even in our enlightened times, and if she is too often a sufferer from the inevitable movements of society, what must have been her position and needs in those ruder ages, had not the genius of Christianity opened refuges for her weakness, made inviolable by the awful sanctions of religion?¹⁸

Such an image of the convent stands in marked contrast to that portrayed in *Six Months in a Convent*. In this regard,

¹⁶Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister’s Wooing* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), p. 223. Further citations will be to this edition and will be embedded in the text.

¹⁷Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Agnes of Sorrento* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1900), p. 77.

¹⁸Stowe, *Agnes of Sorrento*, p. 49.

Nancy Lusignan Schultz's characterization of Mary Ann Moffat, the mother superior Rebecca Reed castigates, is instructive. Schultz describes Moffat as an intelligent woman with ambitions—ambitions that could best be fulfilled, somewhat paradoxically, within the confines of the convent. “The convent’s hierarchical structure promised the opportunity for ever-increasing authority and responsibility,” Schultz explains, and “convent vows that were framed as self-imposed limitations in some ways gave nineteenth-century women their best chance for a life of self-expression and fulfillment.”¹⁹ With their anti-Catholic rhetoric, theologians like Bushnell sought to discredit this potentially liberating space and the mother superior who presided over it and to reinstate the Protestant home and the male God and the male head-of-household who were its proper reigning authorities.

The plot of *Agnes of Sorrento* revolves around a pious heroine's necessity to choose between the convent she loves and the disgraced Italian nobleman who loves her. Her parents having died, Agnes has been raised by her grandmother Elsie, an Italian who nonetheless possesses the traits and attitudes—sensible, hardworking, and reserved when it comes to most forms of intimacy—of one of Stowe's stolid New England matrons. Elsie sends Agnes to the convent with the goal of preparing her for marriage and motherhood, thereby securing Elsie's comfort in her old age. But Agnes, who feels most at home in the convent, repeatedly tells her grandmother that she wants to become a nun. Though Agnes's narrative will resolve with a marriage to her nobleman love object, her affection for the nuns and her initial commitment to their calling serves as a celebration of the convent and its potential for women. And although Elsie's fears echo anti-Catholic claims that the convent removes women from their proper roles as wives and mothers, Stowe defends the nunnery as a refuge from the world's volatile and dangerous passions. In this sense, one might say, Stowe positions the convent as a sphere outside of and distinct from the separate social spheres

¹⁹Schultz, *Fire and Roses*, p. 19.

inhabited by men and women, a realm in which a woman might continue to enjoy the privileges of privacy and affection while nonetheless removing herself from the domestic sphere.

Privacy is, indeed, the primary advantage that Mary and Virginie enjoy within the convent-like confines of the Scudder home, and they enjoy it without the threat of outside influence, even from Mrs. Scudder herself. Early in the novel, the narrator identifies and gently chides Mrs. Scudder for her anti-Catholicism. When likening Mary's appearance to images of the Madonna, the narrator makes it quite clear that the provincial Mrs. Scudder would brook no such comparison: "But Mrs. Scudder was thinking of no such Popish matter, I can assure you,—not she! I don't think you could have done her a greater indignity than to mention her daughter in any such connection" (p. 14). Although she welcomes Virginie into her home and does nothing to disrupt the ecumenical safety present there, Mrs. Scudder leaves her guest to Mary's care. When Miss Prissy expresses concerns about Virginie's potentially dubious morals—she being doubly suspicious as both a French woman and a Catholic—Mrs. Scudder replies, "Mary has not said much about her state of mind. . . . Mary is such an uncommon child, that I trust everything to her" (p. 253). Thus Mrs. Scudder quietly abdicates any responsibility for Virginie's well-being and transfers it to Mary. Within the seclusion of her room, Mary offers Virginie a refuge, to borrow a phrase from *Agnes of Sorrento*, "for her weakness."²⁰ It is here that Virginie confesses her sorrows to Mary, here that they pray together.



When she first meets Virginie, Mary has yet to experience her own sorrow. Early in the novel Mary stands in the kitchen doorway, bathed in sunlight; her "statuesque beauty" and "tremulous, half-infantine expression" remind the narrator of "some

²⁰Stowe, *Agnes of Sorrento*, p. 49.

old pictures of the girlhood of the Virgin" (pp. 13–14), who also has yet to face the grand tragedy of her life, the majestic drama of Christian salvation.²¹ After Mary learns that James has died at sea, this early comparison gives way to one that is deeper, more mature, and more affecting; Mary becomes, the narrator tells us, "a sanctified priestess of the great worship of sorrow" (p. 220).

In a poem written for the *New York Evangelist* in 1844, Stowe portrays "Mary at the Cross." In a literary apotheosis that verges on Mariolatry, the narrator invokes the Virgin Mother at the moment of Jesus' crucifixion:

Now by that cross thou takest the final station,
And sharest the last dark trial of thy son;
Not with weak tears, or woman lamentations,
But with high, silent anguish, like his own.²²

Granted almost coequal status with the suffering Christ, Stowe's Mary enacts a form of sympathetic bonding whereby her capacity to absorb her son's anguish in turn increases her holiness. Likewise, Mary Scudder's deeply felt grief imbues her with a saintly aura and places her at the household's spiritual center.

In this state, Mary quietly works through her pain about James. "Sorrow is godlike," the narrator comments, a sadness evident in Mary's face: "In her eyes, there was that nameless depth that one sees with awe in the Sistine Madonna,—eyes that have measured infinite sorrow and looked through it to an infinite peace" (p. 210). Like the Virgin Mary, Mary Scudder becomes a spiritual force, and her mournful devotion draws

²¹Elsewhere Mary is compared to Catherine of Siena. Likewise, the eponymous heroine of *Agnes of Sorrento* is associated with the patron saint of virgins, Agnes. In her article "Art and the Body in *Agnes of Sorrento*," Gail K. Smith astutely points out that Agnes is not just compared to the saint of the same name but to artistic representations of her as well, and she argues that Stowe is interested in the Catholic aesthetic, as much as the ascetic, tradition. The same conclusions could also be applied to Mary in *The Minister's Wooing*. See Smith, "Art and the Body in *Agnes of Sorrento*," in *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture*, ed. Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B. Todd (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), pp. 167–86.

²²Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Mary at the Cross," *New York Evangelist*, 28 November 1844, pp. 15, 48.

others in need of guidance and intercession to her. James's mother, Mrs. Marvyn, comes to Mary and confesses her doubts about Calvinism and her fears that an unregenerate James has been consigned to hell. She is tentative, even ashamed, to be questioning Calvinist doctrine, and Mary is the only person she feels she can talk to about her heretical views. We do not get Mary's response in this moment, but the narrator tells us (invoking Luke 2:19), "Mary kept all things and pondered them in her heart" (p. 207).

An alternative response to the sorrow that courses through the novel bursts forth when the Scudder family servant (until recently, their slave), Candace, dramatically challenges Calvinistic reserve with her gentle but persuasively emotive evangelical declarations. As Mrs. Marvyn sinks deeper into a desolation that, the narrator suggests, "was just verging on insanity," Candace chooses to intervene. She has been listening on the other side of the door for an hour when Mary calls for Mr. Marvyn to console his wife. When he is unable to offer gospel comfort, Candace takes over. She reminds the grieving mother about the Lord's love for her and for James, ending her monologue with the assurance, "He died for Mass'r Jim,—loved him and *died* for him,—jes' give up his sweet, precious body and soul for him on de cross! Laws, jes' *leave* him in Jesus's hands! Why, honey, dar's de very print o' de nails in his hands now!" (p. 201). Cutting through the theological hesitancies of Calvinism to the very heart of evangelical Christianity, Candace is able to calm Mrs. Marvyn effectively, affectively, and immediately.

Beyond her words of solace, Candace uses her body to produce the catharsis that releases the mourning mother from her "ecstasy of despair." The narrator describes the scene: "[Candace] gathered the pale form to her bosom, and sat down and began rocking her, as if she had been a babe" (p. 201). It is this combination of "feeling"—an evangelical belief in Christ's love and loving human contact—that produces the desired end. Following Candace's intervention, the "flood-gates were rent; and healing sobs and tears shook the frail form. . . . All in the room wept together" (p. 201). There is nothing "cool and collected" (to return to Lyman Beecher's advice to his daughter

Catharine) about this moment—it is a purposefully excessive scene of shared grief that moves not only Mrs. Scudder but everyone in the room. As such, the evangelical episode, and Candace's spirituality in particular, uncovers the limitations of an institutionalized Calvinism.

Earlier in the same chapter, the narrator praises the complex legacy of New England Puritanism through the self-effacing piety of men such as Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd. Still, they are men so atypical in their devotion as to be unapproachable. The narrator reflects (invoking St. Augustine),

[T]he clear logic and intense individualism of New England deepened the problems of Augustinian faith, while they swept away all those softening provisions so earnestly clasped to the throbbing heart of the great poet of theology. No rite, no form, no paternal relation, no faith or prayer of the church, earthly or heavenly, interposed the slightest shield between the trembling spirit and Eternal Justice. The individual entered eternity alone, as if he had no interceding relation in the universe. [P. 198]

The narrator, then—and in this instance I believe we can safely assume that the voice is Stowe's—is concerned not only with Calvinism's austerity but with its intense individualism, an individualism that leaves the supplicant alone and trembling, bereft of the various means of comfort that are available through other traditions, especially Roman Catholicism—rites, prayers, intercessions—and evangelicalism—communal conversion, affective assurances, physical involvement. Candace's gestures toward Mrs. Marvyn are remarkable in this regard, for they console not just the grieving mother but all who are present in the room. Candace not only rejects institutionalized Calvinism in her gesture, she models an alternative built around the immediacy of Christ's love experienced through religious community. Although theologians like Bushnell insisted that it was revivalism that fostered an "extreme individualism," Stowe rejects this claim by portraying a faith that is affectively charged as having the capacity to envelop the larger community.

Mary and Candace's ability to reach Mrs. Marvyn through their common sorrow returns us to Mary's relationship with

Virginie. While Mary grieves for James, Virginie is suffering her own personal torment. Although she is married, Burr has been pursuing her, and despite her better judgment, she has fallen in love with him. In her essay "The Courage to Speak and Hear the Truth," Marianne Noble explores Burr's significance to the novel's philosophy of empathy and identification. Although possessed of a "natural" sympathy, she explains, he is ultimately tarnished by his egoism.²³ I agree with Noble's assessment but would like to extend it to examine more fully Burr's usefulness to the novel as what I will call an "affective catalyst." Stowe takes pains to portray Burr as the novel's "Lovelace," thus aligning him with that most famous seducer of eighteenth-century British fiction, who both charmed and scandalized readers on both sides of the Atlantic. Burr, however, does not finally succeed with his seduction and, thus, does not exert the narrative influence that Lovelace does in *Clarissa*; rather, Burr operates on the fringes of the text, lending it both his historical verisimilitude and his literary allusiveness, while generating an energy that is transmitted to other narrative arenas of the text.

Like the presumed dead James, Burr breeds sorrow, a sorrow that brings Virginie to Mary. Seeking refuge from him, Virginie exclaims to her friend, "I came to confess to you" (p. 222). Mary's room, once as open and expansive as an entire convent, now shrinks to the intimacy of the confessional, where the traditional hierarchy between priest and sinner is replaced by the ideal of sympathetic bonding. Detractors saw this private space as the location where Catholic power was wielded most effectively, for the suppliant was obliged to surrender his or her most private thoughts to the priest. In his 1854 denunciation of the practice, former priest William Hogan writes, "If I can satisfy Americans that *Auricular Confession* is dangerous to their liberties; if I can show them that it is the source and fountain of many, if not all, those treasons, debaucheries,

²³Marianne Noble, "The Courage to Speak and Hear the Truth: Sympathy and Genuine Human Contact in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing*," *New England Quarterly* 81.4 (December 2008): 679.

and other evils, which are now flooding this country, I shall feel that I have done an acceptable work, and *some service to the State*.”²⁴ Hogan’s statement nicely summarizes anti-Catholic anxieties about the confessional, that it is a site of political persuasion, secret crimes, and sexual transgressions. By means of the confessional, the conscience of every Catholic could be bent to the will of the priest and, by extension, the Pope.

But whereas anti-Catholic polemicists characterized the intimacy of the priest’s confessional as coerced, Virginie approaches Mary voluntarily, reverently: “There was something . . . so sacred in the expression on Mary’s face that Madame de Frontignac crossed herself, as she had wont before a shrine; and then said, ‘Sweet Mary, pray for me; I am not at peace’” (p. 222). Drawing Mary to a window seat, Virginie then kneels down and places her head in Mary’s lap. Confiding that Burr has toyed with her affections, Virginie, as the narrator observes, “enacted before [Mary] this poetry and tragedy of real life, so much beyond what dramatic art can ever furnish” (p. 226). It is significant, of course, that Virginie’s confession is *enacted*, that is, literally embodied. As with Candace and Mrs. Marvyn, an outpouring of sorrow creates bonds that are simultaneously physical, emotional, and spiritual.



The spiritual communion that Mary and Virginie enjoy is devoid of the usual disputes between Catholics and Protestants. The narrator says of the Scudders, as they pray for James’s soul, “The truly good are of one language in prayer. Whatever lines or angles of thought may separate them in other hours, when they pray in extremity, all good men pray alike” (p. 185). Stowe’s way of dealing with the religious tensions of her era is to locate the universal truth of Christianity in a shared response to human suffering—prayer—which unites people of different faiths. Endorsing the affective and social behaviors that animate

²⁴William Hogan, *Popery! As It Was and As It Is. Also, Auricular Confession; and Popish Nunneries* (Hartford: Silas Andrus and Son, 1854), pp. 232–33.

nineteenth-century revivalism at the same time as it reclaims the convent from anti-Catholic diatribes, *The Minister's Wooing* thus attempts to create an ecumenical community of feeling that salvages the best of various religious practices to address a fundamental need: how to cope in the face of the world's many sorrows.

John Gatta, in his essay "The Anglican Aspect of Harriet Beecher Stowe," writes that Stowe "came to regard the Anglican-Episcopal ethos as peculiarly conducive to Christian training and the spiritual nurture of young people. She also came to value its sacramental emphasis, which inspired a search for 'outward and visible' signs of 'inward and spiritual grace,' because it envisioned divine love as an outgrowth—not a denial—of natural human affections."²⁵ In addition, the Episcopal Church brought Stowe closer to the Catholic iconography and liturgy that, as is evidenced in *The Minister's Wooing* and elsewhere, she clearly valued. Stowe's interest in Catholic iconography can be traced in part to her European travel, and Gail K. Smith in her article "Art and the Body in *Agnes of Sorrento*" has explored the same influence in that novel. But as Dorothy Z. Baker writes, "Although her experience of Italian and Flemish art and her observation of French women deepened her belief that the female body was an instrument of spirituality, her American Calvinist tradition had already instilled that conviction in her."²⁶ Baker goes on to list exemplars such as Sarah and Jonathan Edwards, and this association of Catholic imagery and evangelical religious practice gives us another entry point into Stowe's relation to the anti-Catholic debates of her own time.

Revivalism was an ecstatic manifestation of Protestant affirmation, whereby groups of Christians, sometimes of various denominations, would be collectively moved, both physically and emotionally, and would coalesce around feelings like love,

²⁵John Gatta, "The Anglican Aspect of Harriet Beecher Stowe," *New England Quarterly* 73.3 (September 2000): 415.

²⁶Dorothy Z. Baker, "French Women, Italian Art, and Other 'Advocates of the Body' in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing*," *New England Quarterly* 83.1 (March 2010): 69.

grief, and shame. Conversion and regeneration were processes that happened in and on the body, revivalism's answer to "outward and visible signs"—the same kind of bodily legibility that unites Mary and Virginie in their sorrow and in their spiritual transformation. And although Lyman Beecher and others attempted to proscribe these ritualized and embodied practices, Stowe gives them pride of place in her ecumenical framework.

Of course, ecumenical community formation is not an uncommon phenomenon in Stowe's work, the most notable being the Quaker community that shelters Eliza and George in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Rachel Halliday, who becomes a surrogate mother for the anxious Eliza as she awaits news about George, calms the girl with the words "my daughter," words that "came naturally" from her lips, "for hers was the face and form that made 'mother' seem the most natural word in the world."²⁷ Rachel and Eliza cross religious and racial lines in the Quaker enclave, a model of Christian community and abolitionist sentiment where George begins to overcome his own resistance to gospel Christianity. When George is seated as an equal at a white man's table, the moment prompts a conversion:

This, indeed, was a home,—*home*,—a word that George had never yet known a meaning for; and a belief in God, and trust in his providence, began to encircle his heart, as, with a golden cloud of protection and confidence, dark, misanthropic, pining, atheistic doubts, and fierce despair, melted away before the light of a living Gospel, breathed in living faces, preached by a thousand unconscious acts of love and good will, which, like the cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, shall never lose their reward.²⁸

Although the Quaker community and the Scudder home share the ideals of abolitionism, domesticity, and Christian piety, the Quaker community in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* links a revolution in feeling to a revolution in faith. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* condemns George's impiety by means of Eliza's anguished concerns for

²⁷Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852; New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), p. 117.

²⁸Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, p. 122.

his soul, but nowhere in *The Minister's Wooing* is Catholicism linked to incorrect beliefs or a need for conversion. Virginie is in need of a revolution of the heart, but that change does not affect her faith. Of Mary and Virginie's friendship, the narrator observes: "there they were, the Catholic and the Puritan, each strong in her respective faith, yet melting together in that embrace of love and sorrow, joined in the great communion of suffering" (p. 228). Indeed, the novel's refusal to characterize the convent as a prison is concomitant with its refusal to see Virginie as an object of conversion.²⁹

For all of *The Minister's Wooing's* attraction to Catholic spaces and rituals, their allure remains decidedly gendered. Stowe can imagine certain positive effects Catholicism might have on men, but she is primarily interested in the female rituals and icons of Catholicism.³⁰ The extent of her gendered conception of Catholicism in this period of her life can be gauged by an incident in which she took part in her era's anti-Catholic debates. In 1846, she wrote a review of German historian Leopold Von Ranke's *History of the Popes* for the *New York Evangelist*, the same publication that had printed her poem "Mary at the Cross" two years earlier. Ranke argues, Stowe explains, that the Catholic Church had reasserted its dominance in post-Reformation Europe through the agency of education, specifically through the work of the Jesuits. Noting that the Catholic Church has had the same success in the western United States, much as her father did in his *A Plea for the West*, she worries about the American public's general

²⁹This effect of respecting Virginie's religion also relates to Noble's claim that Stowe's model of sympathetic identification "blends a generous willingness to identify with what another feels with a frank acknowledgment of that other's difference" ("The Courage to Speak and Hear the Truth," p. 701).

³⁰This projecting of Catholicism onto a male figure occurs when the narrator comments about Reverend Hopkins, "But there was lying in him, crude and unworked, a whole mine of those artistic feelings and perceptions which are awakened and developed only by the touch of beauty. Had he been born beneath the shadow of the great Duomo of Florence, where Giotto's Campanile rises like the slender stalk of a celestial lily, where varied marbles and rainbow-glass and gorgeous paintings and lofty statuary call forth, even from childhood, the soul's reminiscences of the bygone glories of its pristine state, his would have been a soul as rounded and full in its sphere of faculties as that of Da Vinci or Michel Angelo" (p. 56).

ignorance of the matter's urgency when she asks, "Do they know that in the great Western metropolis, the political power is already in the hands of the Catholics?"³¹ At this point, readers might wonder how an author who, as I argue, is so committed to recuperating the possibilities of the convent and the veneration of Mary and other female saints could so unreservedly adopt the rhetoric of anti-Catholicism. The answer, I believe, lies in the different uses to which men and women apply their Catholic education.

In her review of Ranke, Stowe is worried about the "political power" the Jesuits are able to assert through education. The nunnery, on the other hand, appeals to her precisely because it offers a refuge from politics, just as it offered Agnes the ability to withdraw from the ravages of medieval Italy. In this regard, the convent accords nicely with Stowe's commitment to the ideology of separate spheres. At this time in her life, Stowe does not believe that women are called to direct political engagement.³² Like Mrs. Bird in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, insofar as a woman exerted any influence in worldly matters, it should proceed directly from her moral, her domestic authority. And so although the Jesuits pose a danger in their attempts to infiltrate the educational institutions of the United States, and thus sway its political affairs, that concern does not affect women. In other words, for Stowe, Catholicism for men is all about power and competition; for women it is about retreating, and enabling others to retreat, from those fretted realms.



Ultimately, even though it is rife with positive images of convents and confessionals, *The Minister's Wooing* reasserts the authority of the traditional (and largely Protestant) domestic sphere. Virginie's sojourn at the Scudder's home is restorative,

³¹Harriet Beecher Stowe, "What Will the American People Do?" *New York Evangelist*, 5 February 1846, p. 17.

³²Stowe's attitude changes in the period following the Civil War, as Joan D. Hedrick charts in her biography of Stowe and in Stowe's later novel, *My Wife and I* (1871). See Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 353–79.

but it is never presented as an alternative to marriage. As the narrator comments, “The domesticating of Madame de Frontignac as an inmate of the cottage added a new element of vivacity to that still and unvaried life” (p. 232). But this domestication among the Scudders, a luxurious indulgence in the female world of love and ritual, is not just a retreat from Burr’s dangerous advances but a preparation for assuming her responsibilities as a wife and mother. Just as Mary weds James (reports of his death were greatly exaggerated!), Virginie returns to her husband. In this way, the novel fulfills the expectations its plot had engendered as the world of normative heterosexual relations is reestablished. The Scudder home as convent is thus reimagined in its Protestant dimensions, as a site where Protestant families might comfortably educate their daughters, where those young women would learn the refined arts and skills that will allow them to excel in the domestic sphere.

Stowe’s brother Edward had described Catholic education as “seductive,” a word that marks the evolution of anti-Catholic discourse from Lyman in the 1830s to Edward in the 1850s. For Edward, the antidote to that poison was the family, whose domestic intimacies stand in opposition to the unnatural celibacy of the Catholic Church. Jenny Franchot writes that at the heart of Edward Beecher’s book “lies an evangelical, sentimental theology of marriage and domesticity in which Protestant familial love appears in its historical posture of provocative vulnerability to the antidomestic evils of Catholicism, calamities generated by the original sin of celibacy.”³³ For Beecher, Christian domesticity becomes evangelicalism’s rallying force against the twin evils of ecstatic religious practice and Catholicism. Toward the end of *The Minister’s Wooing*, readers might be tempted to see Stowe agreeing with her brother in this regard, but to hold that view is to ignore not only the novel’s “minor plot” but its conclusion.

The final scenes of *The Minister’s Wooing* are not of the satisfactions of marriage but of the ramifications of Aaron Burr’s

³³Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 131.

unsuccessful seduction. Virginie (now a mother) and Mary exchange letters about Burr's duel with Alexander Hamilton. Overcome with grief, Virginie tells Mary that her son Henri "saw by my face, when I read your letter, that something pained me" (p. 330). The book's ultimate image is of Burr's grave, "a plain granite slab," placed there not by Virginie but, years later, by Henri (p. 332). In the end, Virginie's resumption of married life cannot fully control the affective energy unloosed by her relationship with Burr. The sadness that unites her to Mary, so formidable that it reformulates Protestant-Catholic relations, is extended through Virginie's son, whose gesture of filial love and responsibility honors the affective channels through which the novel's heart blood flows. The privately shared sorrow of Mary and Virginie cannot be contained, its power and excess guaranteeing its continued vitality, utility, and transmissibility.

This affective transmission brings us back to Noble's essay. Noble argues that the novel can be read for its prescient model of sympathetic identification, one that prefigures recent work by Jessica Benjamin and D. L. Winnicott. "In contrast to the Freudian model of a monadic self as formed within a nuclear family," the novel presents "a fluid, intersubjective identity [that] is forged within a complex web of relationships."³⁴ This fluidity is something I have been charting not only in *The Minister's Wooing* but within antebellum evangelicalism more broadly. Noble goes on,

We need not evoke theories of cultural work to value Stowe's writing. We need not focus solely on world politics to take stock of her achievement. We need not abandon our supposedly modern taste for subtle observation, judicious thought, and a profound assessment of human psychology to appreciate her fiction.³⁵

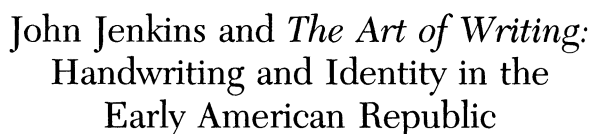
With that observation, Noble attempts to revise the critical history of Stowe, a history that often ignores or marginalizes the aesthetic and psychological complexity of her novels to concentrate on their more (ostensibly) compelling historical and

³⁴Noble, "Courage to Speak and Hear the Truth," p. 678.

³⁵Noble, "Courage to Speak and Hear the Truth," p. 701.

cultural dimensions. But although Noble offers a deeply nuanced reading of the affective model of *The Minister's Wooing*, her attempted reparation throws out the proverbial baby with the bathwater. As I have attempted to show, in *The Minister's Wooing*, the psychological is the historical; they are not oppositional modes of scholarship but deeply imbricated. The heartache Burr inspires, a heartache that unites Mary and Virginie in their temporary, idealized convent space, is generative; moving freely and unpredictably, it recurs in the next generation, where it can be honored if not resolved. Intervening in the debates of a particular historical moment, Harriet Beecher Stowe's sentimental novel addresses the anti-Catholic rhetoric of American evangelicals through psychology, through a readership that connects with, transmits, and reshapes the emotion—the sorrow—that animates the novel.

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RICHARD S. CHRISTEN

ALTHOUGH English handwriting texts circulated in British North America throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the first “purely American designed, made and produced” penmanship book did not debut until 1791.¹ Written by John Jenkins, a thirty-six-year-old New England schoolmaster, *The Art of Writing, Reduced to a Plain and Easy System* was little more than a pamphlet—thirty-two pages of text accompanied by a frontispiece and four plates of engraved writing samples. The slim volume is remarkable, however, for it unveiled an alternative to English-influenced handwriting practices, and bolstered by endorsements from a cluster of New England notables—including John Adams, Timothy Dwight, and John Hancock—it was immediately popular. By 1813, when a second edition appeared, the Jenkins system had become America’s handwriting standard.² The key to this success was an

¹John Jenkins, *The Art of Writing, Reduced to a Plain and Easy System* (Boston: Thomas and Andrews, 1791); Stanley Morison, *American Copybooks: An Outline of Their History from Colonial to Modern Times* (Philadelphia: Wm. F. Fell, 1951), p. 20. Citations to quotations from the 1791 edition of *The Art of Writing* will be embedded in the text and will be designated 1st ed.

²John Jenkins, *The Art of Writing, Reduced to a Plain and Easy System* (Cambridge, Mass.: Flagg and Gould, 1813). A “third edition,” identical to the 1813 book, was printed in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, in 1816. Citations to quotations from the 1813 edition of *The Art of Writing* will be embedded in the text and will be designated 2nd ed.

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innovative pedagogy that promised to make penmanship “plain and easy.” In contrast to the traditional method of teaching and learning writing—pupils endlessly copying exemplars under the stern watch of a master—Jenkins instructed students to analyze the structure of letters carefully before executing them. This hand-and-mind combination, he boasted, would dramatically abbreviate the time needed to learn writing and bring handwriting mastery within the reach of all Americans.

Such claims seem trivial today, when handwriting has become increasingly irrelevant, its economic, social, and educational functions nearly exhausted.³ But in the late eighteenth century, penmanship was a prized skill. Essential to commerce, government, education, and personal correspondence as well as a recognized marker of character, class, gender, and occupation, it was a valuable social and economic tool. And because it mattered in these practical ways, the pen was an important means of fashioning, expressing, and controlling identity. Early Americans used penmanship to convey ideas, pursue their ambitions, and most important, present themselves to friends and colleagues.⁴ Certain scripts carried more prestige than others—elegant penmanship signified refinement; a plain hand represented lower social rank, for example—and mastery of a specific hand was a highly visible way of positioning oneself within society. Handwriting instruction, which regulated access to these styles, became a practical manifestation of collective values. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, penmanship teaching methods typically restricted elegant handwriting to

³Interest in penmanship instruction has revived recently, spurred in part by neuroscientists’ claims of a connection between brain development and handwriting. See Kitty Burns Florey, *Script and Scribble: The Rise and Fall of Handwriting* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Melville Publishing, 2009); Stephen T. Peverly, “The Importance of Handwriting Speed in Adult Writing,” *Developmental Neuropsychology* 29.1 (2006): 197–216; and Gwendolyn Bounds, “How Handwriting Trains the Brain: Forming Letters Is Key to Learning, Memory, Ideas,” *Wall Street Journal*, 5 October 2010, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704631504575531932754922518.html>; accessed 21 July 2011. For a critique of this revival, see Anne Trubeck, “Stop Teaching Handwriting,” *Good: The Magazine*, 11 February 2008, at <http://www.good.is/post/stop-teaching-handwriting/>; accessed 18 July 2011.

⁴Tamara Plakins Thornton, *Handwriting in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. x.

political and cultural elites and, in the process, reinforced aristocratic hierarchies.

Writing in the shadow of the American Revolution, Jenkins recognized that subtle changes in everyday cultural practices like handwriting could have significant effects on the character of the new nation.⁵ In the 1791 printing of *The Art of Writing*, he predicted that if his pedagogical method and common script were widely adopted, they would foster unity in the new but disjointed republic. Twenty-two years later, in *The Art of Writing*'s revised second edition, Jenkins touted his system's social potential when he promised that a hand-mind method would democratize fine penmanship, bringing beauty and a traditional signifier of gentility and respectability within reach of many more Americans, especially the nascent middle class. Reimagining handwriting as a mental as well as a physical process, he also chipped away at the ancient separation between those who worked with their hands and those who did not. For Jenkins, well-fashioned writing and other skilled handwork were dignified intellectual activities, and the capable craftsman—whether represented by the ingenious mechanic or dutiful clerk—was an archetype for the early nineteenth century.

The two editions of *The Art of Writing* provide valuable insight into the ways in which Americans understood and attempted to shape identity in the early American republic. In 1791, concerned that the new republic might unravel, Jenkins viewed handwriting as an agent of national unity. Two decades later, emphasizing individual social and economic opportunity, he portrayed the pen as a means for Americans to define their place within a promising but uncertain context. Born in 1755 and thus twenty-one years old when independence was declared—not fully a member of either the Revolutionary

⁵For historians advocating this perspective, see David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Thomas Augst, *The Clerk's Tale: Young Men and Moral Life in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Rhys Issac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); and T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of the Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

cohort nor of what Joyce Appleby describes as the “inheriting generation”—Jenkins did not advocate an abrupt break from the past.⁶ His vision of the new United States fused both old and new: glancing back to the values of the eighteenth-century aristocracy, he employed them purposefully to inch toward a more individualistic, mercantile, and middle-class society. Ultimately, Jenkins believed that synthesis—gentility with opportunity, aesthetics with utility, and most important, hand with mind—should define individual and national identity in the early American republic.

Handwriting and Gentility

Prior to Jenkins, British and American penmanship was enmeshed in a hand-mind hierarchy that had dominated Western thought and action since at least classical Greece.⁷ For Aristotle, moral fitness, civic reliability, and social rank depended largely on the type of work one did—manual or intellectual. Reflective contemplation, essential for effective deliberation and virtuous conduct, required leisure, which the pressures of manual work precluded. Citizens “must not lead the life of mechanics and tradesmen for such a life is ignoble and inimical to virtue . . . and the performance of civic duties,” Aristotle insisted. Manual tasks “tend to deform the body [and] absorb and degrade the mind”; if citizens “habitually practice them there will cease to be distinction between master and slave.”⁸ In keeping with his leisure-labor, hand-mind hierarchy, Aristotle recommended different educations for citizens and noncitizens:

⁶Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), p. vii.

⁷Anthony R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1994), and *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (Orlando, Fla.: Harvest, 2003); Frank R. Wilson, *The Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language, and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998); and Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

⁸Aristotle, *Politics* (New York: Modern Library, 1943), pp. 132–33, 321–22. See also Kenneth Charlton, “The Liberal-Vocational Debate in Early Modern England,” in *Preparation for Life: The Paradox of Education in the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. Joan N. Burstyn (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1968), p. 2.

applied learning at the worksite for the city-state's noncitizen laborers, artisans, and merchants; for citizens, a liberal education focusing on such intellectual studies as prepare free men for constructive leisure and civic duties.⁹

In the seventeenth century, Europeans associated intellectual and civic fitness with gentility. Those who mastered manners, grace, good taste, and classical learning—characteristics that, in essence, separated them from the effects of the body—“ought to be preferred in Fees, Honours, Offices, and other dignities of command and government, before the common people,” Englishman Henry Peacham directed in his popular courtesy book *The Compleat Gentleman* (1634). Conversely, “whosoever labour for their livelihood and gaine have no share at all in Nobility and Gentry . . . because their bodies are spent with labour and travaile.”¹⁰ Educational practices in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain and its colonies reinforced Peacham's dichotomy. Grammar schools or private tutors taught the gentry a classical curriculum and aristocratic behaviors, while those engaged in commerce, technical occupations, or other hand labor learned in apprenticeships, on the job, or in what we would today refer to as business schools. Instructional methods also conformed to the hand-mind distinction: physical application for manual skills; memorization, analysis, and other mental techniques for intellectual subjects.¹¹

Although formidable, the Western hand-mind divide was never absolute. In early modern Britain, for example, a vocal minority linked hand labor with Christian virtue, and

⁹Bruce Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education*, expanded ed. (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1995), pp. 17–18.

¹⁰Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman* (1634), repr. as *Peacham's Compleat Gentleman* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), pp. 12–13. According to Lawrence Stone, the primary social divide in early modern England was between “those who did, and those who did not have to work with their hands” (“Social Mobility in England, 1500–1700,” in *Seventeenth-Century England: Society in an Age of Revolution*, ed. Paul S. Seaver [New York: New Viewpoints, 1976], p. 7).

¹¹Kenneth Charlton, “The Teaching Profession in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England,” *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 11 (1967): 29–43, and *Education in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 16–20.

even Peacham grudgingly acknowledged that merchants might become “esteemed and held capable of honour in their Common-wealth.”¹² Mental-manual boundaries were even more permeable in British America. Colonial elites were more likely than their English counterparts to be working men, actively engaged in running estates or in commerce. Moreover, because the colonies had no titled nobility or entrenched hereditary gentry, wealth from commerce, especially the long-distance trade, carried social and political clout, particularly in New England and the middle colonies, which accorded successful merchants like John Hancock and Robert Morris governing roles alongside large landowners, clergy, educated professionals, and government officials.¹³

Nonetheless, gentility and other hand-mind assumptions still played a crucial role in legitimizing America’s “natural aristocracy.”¹⁴ In the absence of other markers of distinction, eighteenth-century colonial authority and status depended heavily on how one appeared to others. Americans expected their leaders, regardless of wealth, to display a repertoire of genteel attributes—classical education, proper dress, correct speech, graceful movement, polite manners, civic engagement, personal disinterest—that would herald their moral worth and separate them from the less polite masses.¹⁵ Hancock and

¹²Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (London: Pelican Books, 1975), pp. 300–302. Nonetheless, Peacham insisted that merchants became worthy of honor only after, following an Aristotelian prescription, “they had ten yeeres before given over Trading and Merchandize” (*Peacham’s Compleat Gentleman*, p. 11).

¹³Mark C. Nitcholas, “The Evolution of Gentility in Eighteenth-Century England and Colonial America” (M.A. thesis, University of North Texas, 2000), p. 155; Stephen Mennell, *The American Civilizing Process* (Malden, Mass.: Polity Press, 2007), pp. 81–83; and Stow Persons, *The Decline of American Gentility* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. v–vi.

¹⁴Mennell, *American Civilizing Process*, p. 94. For more on the nature of the “natural aristocracy,” see Andrew S. Trees, *The Founding Fathers and the Politics of Character* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 2–3, and Gordon S. Wood, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), pp. 11–12.

¹⁵According to Alan Taylor, a late eighteenth-century American became a gentleman “only if other people, common as well as genteel, publicly conceded that he had crossed—by breeding, education, and acquisition—the subtle line separating

Morris were wealthy merchants, but in the end, it was their learning, dress, manners, and public generosity that granted them access to the inner circles of American politics.¹⁶ Similarly, Benjamin Franklin realized that, no matter how prosperous, he would not be able to perform the role of a gentleman convincingly while working as a printer. He retired as soon as he had amassed a “sufficient tho’ moderate fortune” and began, at the age of forty-two, to cultivate the manners, learning, and public-spirited avocations that signified gentility.¹⁷ At the same time, William Cooper, a wealthy upstate New York landowner who, like Franklin, had risen from obscurity, found his rough, clumsy, and bombastic demeanor an obstacle to political influence.¹⁸ Elite colonial women also relied on appearance to distinguish themselves and to display their family’s social status; they acquired luxury goods for their homes, pursued educations directed toward taste and discernment, and organized and participated in exclusive social activities.¹⁹

A hand skill used in a wide range of vocations and activities, mental as well as manual, penmanship was, in some ways,

the genteel few from the common many” (*William Cooper’s Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* [New York: Random House, 1995], p. 14).

¹⁶William M. Fowler Jr., *The Baron of Beacon Hill: A Biography of John Hancock* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980); Harlow Giles Unger, *John Hancock: Merchant King and American Patriot* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2000); and Marko Junkkarinen, “Living an American Lifestyle in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia—Robert Morris, Prosperous Merchant and Family Man,” *EurAmerica* 35 (2005): 459–99. For more on Hancock’s use of gentility, see Gregory H. Nobles, “‘Yet the Old Republicans Still Persevere’: Samuel Adams, John Hancock, and the Crisis of Popular Leadership in Revolutionary Massachusetts, 1775–1790,” in *The Transforming Hand of Revolution: Reconsidering the American Revolution as a Social Movement*, ed. Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), pp. 258–85.

¹⁷Simon P. Newman, “Benjamin Franklin and the Leather-Apron Men: The Politics of Class in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia,” *Journal of American Studies* 43 (2009): 161–75, and Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1993), pp. 118–19.

¹⁸Taylor, *William Cooper’s Town*, pp. 145–46.

¹⁹Sarah Fatherly, *Gentlewomen and Learned Ladies: Women and Elite Formation in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Bethlehem, Pa.: Lehigh University Press, 2008), pp. 13–18.

an unlikely marker of social rank.²⁰ During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, steady growth in literacy, political centralization, and commerce induced widespread demand across class and occupation for an aptitude that had been rare during the Middle Ages.²¹ Social historian David Cressy estimates, based on document signature rates, that written literacy was nearly universal among the clergy, professionals, and male gentry in seventeenth-century England and that approximately half of tradesmen, skilled artisans, and yeoman could write their names. Overall, less than one-fifth of women could write, Cressy points out, but rates among well-born females and London residents were much higher.²² Upper-class men and in many cases women found the pen useful for studies, household transactions, and personal correspondence. It was even more vital for government, business, and the professions. Bills of sale, ledgers, contracts, and other legal, diplomatic, and financial records—the lifeblood of politics, law, and especially business—all required fast, legible penmanship. The extension of English sea power and long-distance commerce in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gave handwriting another boost as trading companies, stock exchanges, insurance companies, and other commercial entities emerged, all depending on a cadre of workers who could write well.²³

Specialized writing masters taught many types of students, from aspirant clerks to budding gentlemen and ladies.²⁴ The

²⁰For other examples of hand and mind blending in early modern England, see Charlton, “The Liberal-Vocational Debate,” pp. 1–18; Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities, Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 184–200; and Sheldon Rothblatt, *Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education: An Essay in History and Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p. 25.

²¹Henry C. Schulz, “The Teaching of Handwriting in Tudor and Stuart Times,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 6 (1943): 381–425; and Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, pp. 267–69.

²²Since reading was generally taught before writing until the early twentieth century, David Cressy assumes that reading literacy was higher than written signature rates (“Levels of Literacy in England, 1530–1730,” *Historical Journal* 20 [1977]: 1–23).

²³Donald M. Anderson, *Calligraphy: The Art of Written Forms* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), pp. 148–49.

²⁴Early seventeenth-century penman Martin Billingsley complained of so many London competitors that “a man can go into no corner of this city, but he shall see and

masters conducted private lessons for well-born boys and girls, operated schools to train future merchants and supplement the classical learning of grammar school students, who were typically the sons of Britain's elites, and composed instructional manuals, where they frequently proclaimed that effective handwriting was vital to both the aristocrat and the tradesman.²⁵ As early as 1618, Martin Billingsley criticized those who saw penmanship as "onely a hand-labour"; the pen, he pronounced, was "so excellent and of such necessary use, that none ought to be without knowledge herein."²⁶ Similarly, Edward Cocker, England's best-known seventeenth-century writing master, declared handwriting foundational to both the gentleman's liberal studies and the less genteel vocations. "Handwriting" he wrote, "is an Art neither Mechanical nor Liberal, yet the Parent and Original of both . . . highly necessary and behooveful to the Learned and the unlearned."²⁷

Although writing was widely distributed across classes, occupations, and to a lesser extent gender, Billingsley, Cocker, and other English writing masters taught a range of distinctive scripts to meet the differing needs of their clients. Over time, these hands became important indicators of livelihood and social rank.²⁸ Profit-minded shopkeepers and harried clerks typically learned running secretary, a faster version of the cumbersome medieval gothic; the court and aristocracy, for whom handwriting was primarily an aesthetic tool for correspondence and other writing, favored the more chic, stylish, and prestigious italic, a form developed by Italian humanists from a much admired Carolingian script. Handwriting styles also marked

hear of a world of squirting teachers" (*The Pen's Excellencie or The Secretaries Delight* [1618], p. B4v). Grammar schoolmaster Charles Hoole urged his colleagues to release their students to spend one or two hours per day at a writing master's school or hire one as an in-house teacher, either full time or for part of the year (*A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching School* [London, 1660; repr. Syracuse, N.Y.: C. W. Bardeen, 1912], p. 301).

²⁵Cressy, "Levels of Literacy."

²⁶Billingsley, *The Pen's Excellencie*, pp. C2–C2v.

²⁷Edward Cocker, *Arts Glory, or the Pen-man's Treasury* (London, 1674), pp. B1–2.

²⁸Thornton, *Handwriting in America*, p. 23.

gender among the gentry, with gentlemen typically writing a large, brazen version of italic and ladies a more delicate script.²⁹

In the colonies, penmanship signaled occupation and social rank in more subtle ways. Written literacy rates were higher in British America than in England, with nearly all white males and 50 to 90 percent of women, depending on social class and location, capable of signing their name by the end of the eighteenth century. British American scripts, moreover, were never as distinct as in the mother country, and over time, they bled into one another. Nearly every late eighteenth-century colonial writer—shopkeeper as well as aristocrat, man as well as woman—used some form of roundhand, a relatively simple script that merged elements of both running secretary and italic.³⁰ Commercial groups, however, tended toward a spare and tidy roundhand, concerned more with speed and efficiency than with beauty; less dependent on practicality, female writers across classes and aristocratic males retained as many elements of the elegant italic as possible.³¹ Among colonial women, handwriting possessed a delicacy akin to needlework. Well-bred men, on the other hand, wrote boldly and frequently adorned their letters with flourishes and other decorative elements.³²

Eager to display their gentility, many late colonial and early national elites were fastidious about handwriting. Benjamin Franklin stressed the importance of penmanship in his autobiography, and later his skilled roundhand was featured on

²⁹For more on early modern England's handwriting scripts, see Hilary Jenkinson, "The Teaching and Practice of Handwriting in England," *History* 2 (1926): 130–38, 21–18; Stanley Morison, "The Development of Handwriting: An Outline," intro. to Ambrose Heal, *The English Writing-Masters and Their Copy-Books, 1570–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), pp. xxi–xl; and Schulz, "The Teaching of Handwriting," pp. 381–425.

³⁰Carl F. Kaestle et al., *Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading since 1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 19–23. E. Jennifer Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), p. 376. For a discussion of the groups practicing handwriting in colonial America, see Thornton, *Handwriting in America*, pp. 6–12.

³¹Morison, *American Copybooks*, pp. 9–19.

³²Catherine Kerrison, *Claiming the Pen: Women and Intellectual Life in the Early American South* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 15; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun* (New York: Knopf, 2001), pp. 148–49.

engraved plates in the American version of Englishman George Fisher's writing manual.³³ Hoping to improve his penmanship as well as his manners, the young George Washington transcribed adages from William Mather's *The Young Man's Companion*. Later, Washington guarded his reputation by rewriting some of his early papers to improve their penmanship. He also had a habit, according to Benjamin Rush, of preparing a new copy of a personal letter if "there were a few erasures on it."³⁴ Similarly, Henrietta Tilghman, from a distinguished family on Maryland's Eastern Shore, urged her friend Polly Pearce to burn their poorly crafted correspondence.³⁵ John Hancock learned fine handwriting and his impressive autograph from Boston's most accomplished and highly regarded penman, Ibiah Holbrook. His famous signature on the Declaration of Independence may have allowed King George to read the tract without his spectacles, as schoolchildren are often taught, but the graceful roundhand and flourished capitals were also intentional reminders that he was a gentleman.³⁶ Conversely, William Cooper's sloppy handwriting was a clear signal, according to Alan Taylor, that "he was in over his depth."³⁷

Colonial writing masters who could teach both elegant and practical styles were in high demand in the eighteenth-century colonies. Hancock's mentor instructed 216 pupils at Boston's South Writing School in 1746, while another 227 studied at the rival North Writing School.³⁸ As writing masters had for generations, Holbrook provided a set of exemplars—either written or engraved in copybooks—that students then imitated until they

³³Ray Nash, *Some Early American Writing Books and Masters* (Hanover, N.H.: H and N, 1943), p. 78.

³⁴Wood, *Revolutionary Characters*, p. 36; Ray Nash, *American Writing Masters and Copybooks: History and Bibliography through Colonial Times* (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1959), p. 23.

³⁵H. M. Tilghman to Polly Pearce (1783 or 1784), cited in Kerrison, *Claiming the Pen*, p. 166.

³⁶Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Person, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), p. 9; Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, p. 127.

³⁷Taylor, *William Cooper's Town*, p. 144.

³⁸Fowler, *Baron of Beacon Hill*, p. 289 n. 19.

could produce an acceptable “school piece” for display. The main text of these pieces was usually a simple roundhand, but Holbrook and other skilled writing masters often pushed their students, even those headed for commercial careers, toward a more aristocratic and socially valued style, which students frequently used for their names, the sample’s title, and other select text. Many also decorated their school pieces with flourishes, colored ink, or even paint, and in some cases, with mythical birds, dragons, and monsters.³⁹

Most students, however, did not learn from a master like Holbrook. Over the last half of the eighteenth century, trained writing masters could not keep pace with proliferating rural schools, and so general schoolmasters were often obliged to teach penmanship. Unlike Holbrook and other skilled masters, who inscribed beautiful samples based on images drawn from copybooks in their professional libraries, many general schoolmasters were often themselves poor writers who produced ungainly models, which inevitably perpetuated an awkward hand among their students.⁴⁰ Over time, the increased production of British or British-influenced copybooks fortified less-skilled teachers with engraved exemplars, freeing them from tedium and embarrassment and their students from the misery of copying an inadequate script. Still, the situation was far from ideal. Country schoolmasters encouraged students to write in the genteel manner, even though they could not properly model it themselves. As a result, most children struggled to write any script well, much less the difficult aristocratic style.⁴¹

³⁹Nash, *American Writing Masters*, p. 16, and Bushman, *Refinement of America*, p. 94. For a detailed description of the writing curriculum in a New England school, see E. Jennifer Monaghan, “Readers Writing: The Curriculum of the Writing Schools of Eighteenth-Century Boston,” *Visible Language* 21 (1987): 167–213.

⁴⁰Holbrook’s library included at least twenty-two British writing manuals (Nash, *American Writing Masters*, pp. 18–19).

⁴¹For a discussion of the expansion of schooling into rural areas during the late eighteenth century, see Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607–1783* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 475–576, 544–51, and Carl E. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), pp. 13–29.

The Jenkins System of Handwriting Instruction

John Jenkins began teaching in 1781. A clumsy writer himself, he initially relied on the traditional methods and writing samples contained in English copybooks. But after years of lamenting the results, he crafted an alternative pedagogy, which he eventually introduced in 1791. Underlying Jenkins's new method was his contention that all letters were constructed from a few basic components. Writing masters had grouped letters according to structural likenesses since the sixteenth century, and some went as far as to identify fundamental letters that served as models for the rest. But they always viewed each form as an integral, unbroken unit.⁴² Jenkins, on the other hand, conceptualized letters as mixtures of interchangeable parts. "In every art and science," he wrote, "there are certain first and fixed principles, which are as a foundation upon which the whole is built. The right understanding of these is absolutely necessary, that we may become masters of the art which we undertake to learn." Writing was no different, Jenkins argued. Six basic pen strokes were writing's building blocks, which could be combined to form twenty-five of the twenty-six lower case letters and many of the capitals. These "first and fixed principles" were the keys to effective penmanship, Jenkins maintained, and their neglect the reason "why, so many months [of penmanship practice], and I may say years, are, with many, but little better than thrown away" (1st ed., pp. 9–10).

For centuries, the copying of models had been the primary focus of handwriting pedagogy, a process that relied heavily on manual skill. Not surprisingly, only a few—those with natural dexterity, resources to hire a skilled writing master, or leisure time to practice extensively—could accurately imitate the writing exemplars. Many more floundered, often working long and hard but seldom advancing beyond a mediocre scrawl.⁴³ Study would help struggling students, Jenkins believed. When writers

⁴²Nash, *American Writing Masters*, p. 30.

⁴³Ray Nash, *American Penmanship, 1800–1850: A History of Writing and a Bibliography of Copybooks from Jenkins to Spencer* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1969), p. 3.

have “clear and distinct ideas of each of the principal strokes well impressed on their minds at first,” he wrote, well-formed letters are “instantly ready to drop from the pen when called for.” Successful writing required more than a mental conception of writing’s building blocks, he acknowledged. Students would need to practice the individual strokes manually to develop dexterity, or, as he put it, “to acquire the right motion of the fingers, or pressure of the pen, in order to draw these strokes upon the paper.” But, he insisted, a mental image must always precede the physical act of writing. “The pen,” Jenkins instructed, “must follow the mind” (1st ed., pp. 9–11).

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writing masters had observed the association between writing and the intellect, yet none saw handwriting as Jenkins did—as a mental activity in its own right.⁴⁴ For them, the writing process was exclusively physical—an activity by which one trained one’s fingers, hand, and arm to mimic a copybook’s beautiful forms.⁴⁵ In the eighteenth century, English writing master John Clark moved closer to the position Jenkins would advocate. “To write a correct hand,” Clark wrote, one must “get an *exact Notion*, or *Idea* of a good *Letter*, which may be done by frequent and nice Observation of a Correct Copy . . . [and] to be able to express, with the *Pen*, that *Idea* upon the Paper.” There was, however, a subtle but significant difference between the two men’s views.⁴⁶ Clark stressed memorization of “the idea of a good letter,” whereas Jenkins delineated a more complex mental process that included both analysis—comprehending component parts—and synthesis—combining those parts to create a whole.

Jenkins’s hand-mind conception of penmanship owed more to the European Enlightenment than to English writing masters. Like many in the Revolutionary generation, Jenkins embraced the Enlightenment belief in a self-evident natural order that could and should be applied to all human organizations

⁴⁴Nash, *American Writing Masters*, p. 30.

⁴⁵See my “Boundaries between Liberal and Technical Learning: Images of Seventeenth-Century English Writing Masters,” *History of Education Quarterly* 39.1 (Spring 1999): 38–43.

⁴⁶Quoted in Nash, *American Writing Masters*, p. 29; see also Morison, *The Development of Hand-Writing*, p. xxxv.

and systems, and he discovered this regularity in the six fundamental strokes that structured the letters of the alphabet.⁴⁷ A pedagogy that tapped into this inherent rationality was key to effectively teaching handwriting, Jenkins thought. Asking a student to put pen to paper without a basic understanding of a letter's form would be like setting "a lad to translate Vergil before he had studied his Latin Grammar, or to solve a difficult problem in mathematics, without the knowledge of the power of figures" (2nd ed., p. x).

Heinrich Pestalozzi, a Swiss educator who espoused Enlightenment ideals, placed a similar emphasis on pedagogical rationality and order. Although best known for his refinement and application of Rousseauian natural education, Pestalozzi also explored the implications of John Locke's ideas on sensory experience. He accepted Locke's notion that sense impression was the foundation of all knowledge and perceived teaching as the "progressive clearing up" of the confusion resulting from initial sensations. When children first view an object, he wrote, they have only a "dim consciousness" of its underlying form or structural design. The role of schools is to teach skills such as "measurement"—the identification of the precise geometric figures and angles comprising an object—to enhance this understanding. All learning, Pestalozzi concluded, required the sorting of basic principles from initial sensory impressions prior to their application.⁴⁸ Although there is no evidence that Jenkins was familiar with Pestalozzi, the two educators clearly held allegiance to the same philosophical tradition.⁴⁹ Both saw the

⁴⁷See Morton White, *The Philosophy of the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 142–84; Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 41–56; and Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), pp. 239–65.

⁴⁸Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children: An Attempt to Help Mothers to Teach their Own Children and an Account of the Method* (1801), trans. Lucy E. Holland and Frances C. Turner (Syracuse, N.Y.: C. W. Bardeen, 1898), pp. 142, 192.

⁴⁹Pestalozzi's ideas were circulating in Europe as early as the 1770s and attracted American supporters, but his colleague Joseph Neef did not bring them to the United States until the early nineteenth century. See William S. Monroe, *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), pp. 39–75.



JENKINS.

*Three things bear mighty sway with Men,
The Sword, the Sceptre and the Pen,
And he who can the least of these Command
In the first rank of Fame he's sure to stand.*

J. Jenkins del.

H. Marshall

Birkham.

FIG. 1.—Frontispiece to the 1813 edition of Jenkins's *The Art of Writing*. Image courtesy of the Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh library.

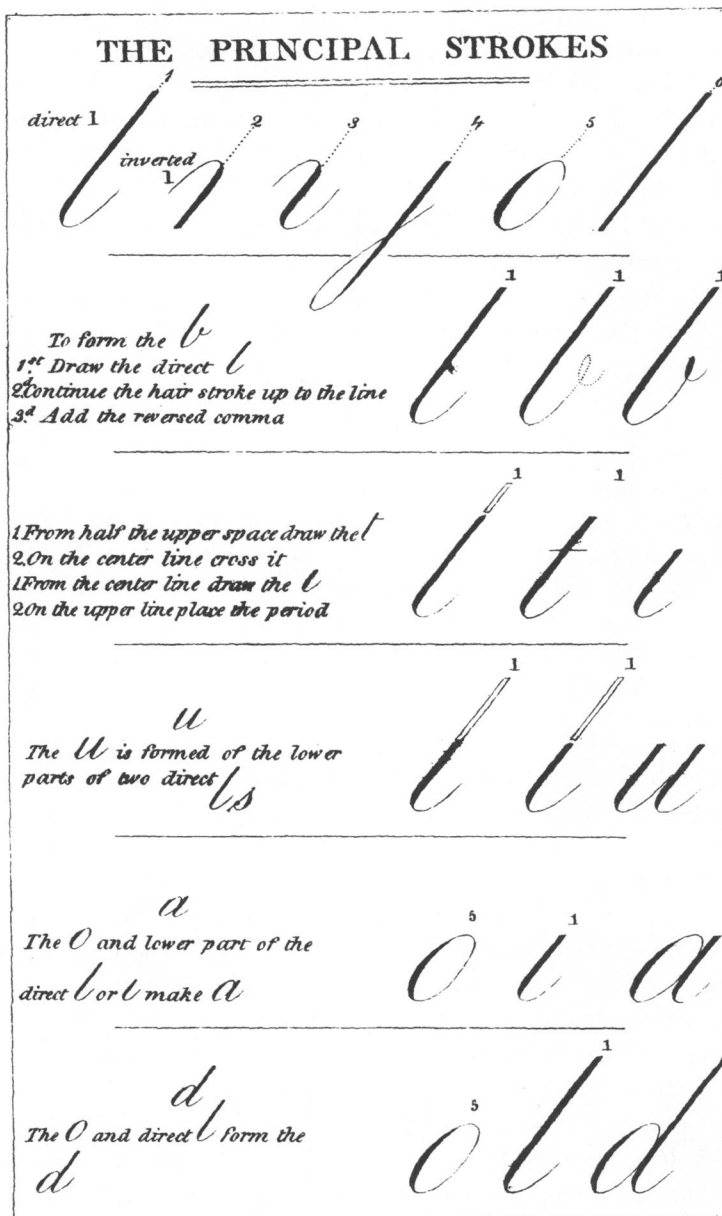


FIG. 2.—Jenkins's six "principal strokes." Image courtesy of the Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh library.

handwriting process as a mental activity—scrutinizing the rational structure underlying each form—followed by physical execution. Pestalozzi encouraged beginning writers to study letters “independently of the use of the pen” before attempting to draw them; Jenkins turned this aspiration into a detailed instructional strategy.⁵⁰

Jenkins’s progressive plan began with rigorous question-and-answer exercises intended to help students quickly grasp the letters’ component parts. After studying “the names and numbers” of the principal strokes, Jenkins’s pupils responded to questions such as,

Ques. Which is the first stroke?

Ans. The direct *l*.

Ques. Are there any other letters contained in the direct *l*?

Ans. The *t*, little *i*, and the *u* are but the lower part of the *l*; the *b* is also formed of the direct *l*, but carrying the hair stroke up to the line, and adding a small swell.

Ques. Is the *l* part of any other letters?

Ans. Yes, the *l* being drawn on the right side of the *o*, makes the *d*; the lower part of the *l* . . . drawn on the right side of the *o*, makes the *a*.

Through dialogues such as this, Jenkins maintained, writers learned “the dependance of the letters upon these strokes, as well as of one letter upon another,” insights that would free them “from all embarrassment, respecting what strokes to draw, or how to draw them” (1st ed., pp. 17, 18, 20). Two decades later, he was more direct. A student, Jenkins warned, must not write until he or she has “committed each dialogue to memory; and is able to answer any question put to him without the book; and has obtained a clear idea of the component parts of the letters” (2nd ed., p. 25). Thus prepared, a student could then pick up a pen and begin a series of sequenced physical drills: learning how to hold the pen without “tremor and awkwardness,” tracing the principal strokes and letters with a “dry” pen, executing the strokes individually and with accuracy, and,

⁵⁰Pestalozzi, *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, p. 198.

finally, combining these strokes into actual letters and words, first in a large script or “school hand,” then in a size suitable for adult use.⁵¹

Handwriting and National Identity

Primarily a how-to, technical manual, the first edition of *The Art of Writing* nonetheless alluded to broader goals. A frontispiece dedication to “the young masters and mistresses throughout the United States” evoked the aim of training more, if not all, American children to write competently. If teachers and students used their minds to support their hands, better penmanship would be achieved—and with less pain—Jenkins promised. Careful study of the letters’ inner structures would reduce the number of forms to be mastered from over two dozen to six, and with only a few fundamental strokes to execute, students would become skilled writers “in half the time usually consumed in the common way.” Individual variations would also be mitigated, he assured, since all aspiring writers would begin with “a proper standard of imitation” (1st ed., pp. 9–10). In short, the Jenkins system would establish a uniform criterion for the benefit of all.

Inspired by fellow New Englander Noah Webster, Jenkins believed that handwriting’s democratization and homogenization would foster a common American identity. Webster is best known for his nineteenth-century dictionary, but he first gained notoriety with *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, a popular spelling book that debuted in 1783, eight years before Jenkins’s handwriting text.⁵² Among average folk and elites alike, eighteenth-century spelling and speaking exhibited little consistency or structure. It was not unusual for a writer to spell the same word differently on a page, and regional

⁵¹ For students whose “fingers [were] stiffened and rendered insensible of the weight of the pen,” Jenkins recommended inserting “a round piece of lead, an inch and an half in length” into the pen. “[T]his weight will at once be perceivable by the learner, and enable him more readily to acquire the command of the pen” (2nd ed., pp. 25–27, 59).

⁵² See E. Jennifer Monaghan, *A Common Heritage: Noah Webster’s Blue-Back Speller* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1983).

pronunciation differences were the norm rather than the exception. According to Webster, the absence of standards made language learning difficult, especially for the burgeoning school population and the one out of four Americans who were non-native speakers. To address the problem, he proposed rules that would “render the acquisition of language easy both to American youth & to foreigners.”⁵³

An ardent nationalist, Webster believed that true independence and unity required widespread use of a language that was both shared and distinct from that of America’s erstwhile mother country. “As an independent nation,” he wrote, “our honor requires us to have a system of our own, in language as well as government. Great Britain, whose children we are, and whose language we speak, should no longer be our standard.” And yet, regional dialects must also be expunged. They “at first excite ridicule,” Webster remarked, with mocking laughter “followed by disrespect.” “Our political harmony is therefore concerned in a uniformity of language.” Spelling and pronunciation rules would impose order, Webster insisted, and over time produce “a language in North America as different from the future language of England, as the modern Dutch, Danish, and Swedish are from German” and “demolish those odious distinctions in provincial dialects, which are the objects of ridicule in the United States.”⁵⁴

In the first edition of *The Art of Writing*, Jenkins extolled Webster’s *Grammatical Institute*. The two authors shared a publisher, the Boston firm of Thomas and Andrews, which acquired the rights to Webster’s spelling book a year before it brought out *The Art of Writing*, and their promotional campaigns, utilizing endorsements from respected schools and

⁵³Noah Webster, “Memorial to Legislature of N York, Jan 18, 1783,” cited in David Micklethwait, *Noah Webster and the American Dictionary* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2000), p. 58. Richard M. Rollins suggests that Webster’s motive was as much social control as nationalism in “Words as Social Control: Noah Webster and the Creation of the American Dictionary,” *American Quarterly* 28.4 (Autumn 1976): 415–43.

⁵⁴Noah Webster, *Dissertations on the English Language* (Boston: I. Thomas and Co., 1789), pp. 22–23; *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, pt. 1 (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1783), p. 6.

individuals, were similar.⁵⁵ But Jenkins no doubt recognized the noted orthographer as a valuable ally with the general public and appreciated the affinities between Webster's approach and his own. Both distilled an important mode of communication into its essential elements and patterns. Both maintained that understanding and applying these patterns would facilitate the acquisition and use of the tools of language. And both believed that standardized language forms would enhance what Jill Lepore refers to as the "act of imagination" that we call nation.⁵⁶ "All are at once ready to acknowledge there should be a proper standard for pronunciation," Jenkins commented. "Is it not as necessary there should be a proper standard to convey our ideas by writing as by pronunciation?" Of course, Jenkins answered. For just as Americans had come to appreciate that "when we are all taught to pronounce alike, we may, without any difficulty, understand one another . . . we shall soon perceive the agreeable effect of that harmony and similarity which will be the natural consequence" of shared handwriting (1st ed., p. 10).

Although attuned to nationalist goals, the first edition of *The Art of Writing* only vaguely referenced penmanship's political, economic, and social potential. Those incapable of writing a legible hand were "in a great measure, disqualified for the service of the public; or even to transact private business with propriety," Jenkins observed (1st ed., p. 9). But, he stopped far short of Thomas Jefferson's and Benjamin Rush's demands for a common school curriculum that would advance republican ideals and national growth, and he said even less about handwriting's social potential.⁵⁷ In the aftermath of the Revolution, many Americans challenged aristocratic structures that

⁵⁵Nash, *American Writing Masters*, p. 33.

⁵⁶Jill Lepore, *A Is for American: Letters and Other Characters in the Newly United States* (New York: Vintage, 2003), p. 17.

⁵⁷Thomas Jefferson, "A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," in *Crusade against Ignorance: Thomas Jefferson on Education*, ed. Gordon C. Less (New York: Teachers College, Columbia, 1961), pp. 83–92; and Benjamin Rush, "A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools and the Diffusion of Knowledge in Pennsylvania," in *Essays on Education in the Early Republic*, ed. Frederick Rudolph (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 1–24.

had been supported, in part, by differentiated writing styles; others, like Webster, used communication models to perpetuate traditional social norms and relationships. Yet in 1791, in the midst of this turbulence, Jenkins did not consider penmanship within the context of social change.⁵⁸ With the second edition, issued nearly a quarter century later, however, he was ready to vaunt the social advantages of his innovative handwriting system.

Elegant Handwriting and Social Identity

Published in 1813, *The Art of Writing*'s second edition included the original text, slightly revised, with several noticeable additions: more pages of endorsements and dialogues, "An Address to Parents and Guardians," an expanded preface that included an autobiographical narrative, and new sections on proportion, slope, and joining letters.⁵⁹ Many of the additions were unabashed attempts to reassert the value of his system and to reclaim it from those authors who, Jenkins complained, had pirated the hand-mind approach over the previous two decades and "palmed their filched and mutilated works on the public, under the idea of improvements" (2nd ed., pp. vii–viii). But at a more fundamental level, Jenkins used the second

⁵⁸In the early twentieth century, John Franklin Jameson (*The American Revolution as a Social Movement* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926]) proposed that the American Revolution was a social movement as well as a political revolution. Since then, many others have advanced his thesis, including Gordon S. Wood in his Pulitzer Prize-winning work *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1992). For critiques of Wood's argument, see Joyce Appleby, "The Radical Recreation of the American Republic," *William and Mary Quarterly* 51.4 (October 1994): 679–83, and Michael Zuckerman, "Rhetoric, Reality, and the Revolution: The Genteel Radicalism of Gordon Wood," *William and Mary Quarterly* 51.4 (October 1994): 693–702.

⁵⁹In the first edition of *The Art of Writing*, Jenkins promised six additional books, but bad health and expensive engraving fees delayed publication. When a second book finally appeared in 1813, it was not a new volume in the proposed series but a second edition of *The Art of Writing*. Books 2 and 3, which were workbooks with a few engravings and rudimentary instructions, were eventually published, the first on an unknown date, the latter in 1817. There is no evidence that the remaining three proposed volumes made it to print. See Nash, *American Writing Masters*, pp. 52–59, and *American Penmanship*, p. 262. See also William E. Eaton, "American School Penmanship: From Craft to Process," *American Journal of Education* 93.2 (February 1985): 255.

edition to preach the social efficacy of his system, evident in his newfound desire to merge practicality with elegance, a long-standing marker of gentility and aristocratic status.

Concerned with method more than product, the initial printing of *The Art of Writing* modeled the principal strokes and letters but showed little interest in aesthetics or style. The aim was first and foremost utilitarian: the service of the republic; transacting business effectively and efficiently (1st ed., p. 9). Two decades later, in the second edition, Jenkins promoted penmanship that was both "useful and ornamental." He urged readers not to "content themselves with barely conveying their ideas in a rough and homely dress" but to strive for a handwriting that was, as his array of adjectives entreated, beautiful, elegant, handsome, fair, and fine. All Americans, Jenkins insisted, should display a hand that "at once, charms and feasts the eye, and, with good sentiments, gratifies the mind" (2nd ed., pp. x, xvii).

Jenkins advocated a simple elegance. Both volumes of *The Art of Writing* displayed a plain roundhand, well crafted but absent the delicate strokes and decorative flourishes that had been popular among the gentry. Since the hand "is intended rather for use than ornament, every thing which has the appearance of the latter is designedly omitted," Jenkins wrote. "All needless scrawls and flourishes naturally obscure the simple idea of the letter, and the learner is thereby not only perplexed, but much retarded in his progress" (1st ed., p. 22). This approach diluted aesthetic standards, according to handwriting historian Ray Nash; it ensured only "a fairly decent average performance," which shoved penmanship "down the path of relaxing discipline and ever looser models."⁶⁰ For Jenkins, on the other hand, simplicity preserved practicality; moreover, it allowed students to focus on the genuine elements of beauty: proportion, slant, and spacing. With the six principal strokes "mathematically adjusted to each other," each letter had a "regular and uniform symmetry," Jenkins declared. When the proper proportion is realized, "the beauty and perfection of a

⁶⁰Nash, *American Writing Masters*, p. 30, and *American Penmanship*, p. 3.

piece of writing is much enhanced." Likewise, "the elegance of writing depends much on the natural and easy slope of the letters, and the beauty and uniformity of the turns, both at the top and the bottom, as well as on the proper distance of the letters from each other." To ensure that this simple refinement would be achieved, Jenkins incorporated question-and-answer dialogues on proportion, slant, and spacing into his second edition. Upon mastery of these exercises, a perfect idea of form and function would be fixed in the mind, Jenkins proclaimed. The writer was then free to embellish, adding "as many ornamental strokes as are necessary" (2nd ed., pp. 28, 40, 41).

Jenkins modeled the social benefits of elegance by means of his own life story. The autobiographical sketch he introduced in the 1813 volume logically traced "the circumstances, by which the author was led to the discovery of his new System of Writing," but it was also an emotional, confessional tale of longing for a graceful hand—"the art in which he felt himself so very deficient"—and the humiliation he had experienced when he did not possess it. "From his early youth he had been highly gratified by examining beautiful specimens of penmanship, and felt a strong desire to imitate them," Jenkins recalled, referring to himself in the third person. As a student, he tried repeatedly to mimic these finely crafted samples, but like most of his classmates, he had little success and "for years despaired of ever obtaining a handsome hand" (2nd ed., p. viii).

Jenkins's sense of inadequacy crystallized years later when he was appointed master in a rural New England school. "He was mortified," he wrote, "at the thought of furnishing his pupils with the very defective models of his own pen, for their improvement in so elegant an art." Seeing no option but to teach as he had been taught, he supplied students with engraved archetypes crafted by master penmen. They diligently applied themselves to copying these handsome exemplars, but most fell short. Humiliated by these results and by his employers' observation that he "ought to be capable of instructing his students without a borrowed hand," Jenkins dedicated himself to finding a way to make refined penmanship more accessible. Experimenting with several innovative techniques over a

number of years, he discovered that once students understood “how each part, or parts, of one letter, was part, or parts, of several other letters,” they slowed their pace, analyzed forms, and thus worked to turn their scrawl into graceful strokes (2nd ed., pp. viii–ix). In 1789, while teaching the sons of several Vermont gentlemen, he made use of his invented method; two years later, he unveiled his “plain and easy” system in the first edition of *The Art of Writing*.

Jenkins's enthusiasm for elegance mirrored a broader craving for gentility among the middle levels of American society during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Rapid urbanization, a growing market economy, and increased democratization destabilized hierarchies and loosened traditional bonds during the era of the early republic, leaving many Americans existentially adrift and anxious, without a clear sense of personal identity and, perhaps more important, where they stood with others.⁶¹ Eager to forge an identity with which to negotiate this newfangled reality, to gain respectable employment, or simply to find a stable footing in this perplexing muddle, many scrambled to acquire the traditional indicators of esteem—including “a genteel, legible, liberal hand”—enumerated in late eighteenth-century courtesy books such as Lord Chesterfield's popular *Letters to His Son*. As advice proliferated, norms of proper conduct eventually evolved into a cluster of characteristics that came to define the middle class.⁶²

Following Chesterfield's lead, Jenkins emphasized the connection between graceful handwriting and social decorum. Sloppy handwriting was “a real defect, as to read or spell erroneously, or to speak ungrammatically,” Jenkins wrote, a flaw

⁶¹ Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, p. 404; Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, pp. 58–63; Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830–1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 34–37, 192–95; Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁶² Chesterfield, quoted in Wilfrid Blunt, *Sweet Roman Hand: Five Hundred Years of Italic Script* (London: James Barrie, 1952), p. 33. For more on Chesterfield's *Letters*, see Lukasik, *Discerning Characters*, pp. 55–72.

that conveyed “a want of taste, and little respect for those to whom we write.” Remembering a conversation with Benjamin Rush, he recounted how the esteemed physician and patriot complained about “two letters lying by him unanswered, as he could by no means decipher the names of the subscribers.” Careless penmanship robbed readers “of that pleasure and satisfaction, which naturally arises in the mind while reading the letter of a friend, written, not only in a good style, but in a fair, handsome hand,” Jenkins grumbled. It also damaged the reputation of the writer. Handwriting that obliged “friends to sit poring over a half written letter, with difficulty reading one part, and guessing at the other,” was “a poor compliment,” Jenkins wrote, a social burden that saddled the writer with “greater disadvantages and embarrassments than is generally imagined.” A fine pen, on the other hand, empowered any American to engage in “correspondence with others, from which they might receive many advantages” (2nd ed., pp. xix, ix–x).

Jenkins was, nonetheless, careful not to overstate the influence of an elegant hand. For him, a graceful pen was primarily involved in what Richard Bushman refers to as a “modest, vernacular gentility,” that is, private, middle-class respectability rather than the public esteem and authority of the eighteenth-century aristocracy.⁶³ Jenkins promoted a style that was both utilitarian and refined, a synthesis that would enrich a writer’s everyday life and solidify his or her social position, increasing one’s ability to display civility, to build personal relationships, to secure employment, and to gratify family and friends. Many, especially small shopkeepers, scribes, and other middling sorts, would certainly profit from a handsome penmanship; it had the potential to transform the script of these writing-dependent groups from an obvious sign of common rank to an emblem of refinement, thus bestowing upon them an air of respectability as well as competence. But, nowhere in either edition of *The Art of Writing* does Jenkins suggest that an elegant pen or any other aspect of genteel appearance would guarantee entry to elite social status, at least not in its public, civic dimension, as

⁶³Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, p. 208.

imagined and exemplified by Washington, Hancock, Franklin, and other Revolutionary leaders. Instead, he proposed that a fusion of physical and mental work opened the door to social primacy in the early republic, unlocking the manual-intellectual distinction that had for so long separated elites from their fellow Americans.

Hand-Mind Work and Social Identity

The hand-mind worker—the “ingenious mechanic”—was Jenkins’s exemplary citizen of early nineteenth-century America.⁶⁴ Designating a more exclusive group than all who worked with their hands, the term “mechanic” referred to the numerous artisans and master craftsmen in the early republic. At least 50 percent of the population in the coastal cities, many had property, supervised and taught apprentices, served customers, employed journeymen, and kept accounts. A few were manufacturers, builders, and inventors, with “ingenious” an adjective often applied to designate these entrepreneurial and innovative activities.⁶⁵ Dismissed by traditional political leaders as lacking academic education and other marks of gentility, skilled artisans in Philadelphia, Charleston, and other cities formed mechanics associations as early as the 1760s to voice their opinions and to demand a role in revolutionary political processes. The more vociferous among them assaulted the aristocracy with a discourse exalting diligence, inventiveness, efficiency, and other values associated with manual work. Productive labor, they argued, was a virtue, while leisure—one of the traditional cornerstones of gentility, privilege, and political authority—was a vice. The attack on aristocratic traditions continued into the early national period, as agrarian-oriented Republicans decried the Federalist gentry; on a different front, the rise of early industrial towns like Lynn, Massachusetts, encouraged a “mechanics

⁶⁴Jenkins, *The Art of Writing* (1813), p. x.

⁶⁵Charles S. Olton, *Artisans for Independence: Philadelphia Mechanics and the American Revolution* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1975), pp. 7–9. See also Carl Siracusa, *A Mechanical People: Perceptions of the Industrial Order in Massachusetts, 1815–1860* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1979), p. 35.

ideology” that promoted labor and production, not gentility, as the legitimate source of social status.⁶⁶

Jenkins contributed to this ideology with a brief but compelling portrait of the ingenious mechanic in *The Art of Writing*’s 1813 edition. A master of manual technique, the ingenious mechanic understood the “nature and use of tools.” But he also used his intellect, obtaining “as far as possible, a clear and distinct idea of all the component parts of the machine which he is about to form.” “Otherwise,” Jenkins concluded, “he might labor for months to no purpose” (2nd ed., p. x). A thinking worker with a craftsman’s technique and the reflectiveness of a gentleman, Jenkins’s ingenious mechanic contested one of the cornerstones of aristocratic privilege: the ancient assumption that physical labor degraded the mind, that those who did manual work were incapable of rational deliberation. As Jenkins presented him, the accomplished artisan’s analytical thought gave vision and purpose to his hands and, in the process, transformed skilled craftsmanship into an honorable enterprise, dignified by its intellectual engagement as well as its productivity.⁶⁷

Jenkins’s conception of the ingenious mechanic embraced accomplished writers as well as traditional artisans. “As writing is in some measure a mechanical art, it should be mechanically taught,” Jenkins wrote, convinced that his hand-mind method would merge mercantile efficiency and productivity with genteel aesthetics. Following this model, students would learn to write in “less than one fourth of the time consumed in the common way,” and the hours thus conserved could be

⁶⁶Olton, *Artisans for Independence*, pp. 20–26. See also Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, p. 243; Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, pp. 276–86; Paul G. Faler, *Mechanics and Manufacturers in the Early Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, 1780–1860* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), pp. 44; and Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1860–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 58–65.

⁶⁷Thomas Jefferson perceived a similar hand-mind balance on the farm, reinforcing his classically-inspired belief that agrarian life was morally superior and the bulwark of government. Jefferson, however, shared little of Jenkins’s enthusiasm for mechanics, whom he considered part of the urban mob (*Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden [New York: W. W. Norton, 1982], pp. 164–65). See also Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 117–44.

beneficially applied to either a commercial or an educational endeavor. By eliminating "great waste of time and stationary [*sic*], and other contingent expenses," the method resulted in an unexpended reserve of one hundred dollars per student, according to a group of Massachusetts officials. All told, they calculated, Jenkins's innovation would save the commonwealth four million dollars over three years, "and all this with a certainty of [students] being able to write a fair and legible hand." Modernizing "the laborious, tiresome, long, and expensive way of learning to write heretofore practised," Jenkins maintained, would also free up time for learning "the various branches of knowledge necessary to be acquired," whether those pursued by the aspiring scholar, businessman, or mechanic (2nd ed., pp. x, 1, 69–71).

As clerks, hand-mind writers would bring an increased measure of both refinement and accuracy to the workplace. "It is certainly desirable that [personal] letters should be so written that they may please, not only by their sentiments, but also by the legibility and elegance of the handwriting," Jenkins commented. "But it is of still more importance in mercantile and all public business, that writing should be executed in a fair hand." Clerks following his method would ensure the quality of "book accounts, bonds, deed, notes, & c. [that] very much depend on the legibility of the writing, and often on a single letter," a skill that, according to Jenkins, would impress employers. "A handsome chirography," he crowed, had introduced many "of indigent circumstances, into business, which has procured them support and affluence" (2nd ed., pp. x, xix).

In comparison to his otherwise tutored counterpart, the hand-mind writer also matured morally. For generations, the genteel behavior and disinterested civic life of the aristocrat were considered to be the highest expressions of virtue, the most legitimate paths to moral development. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, commercial settings had become the primary moral proving ground for middle-class Americans.⁶⁸ Anticipating this transition, Jenkins argued that his

⁶⁸Augst, *The Clerk's Tale*, pp. 5–7. See also Michael Zakim, "The Business Clerk as Social Revolutionary; or, a Labor History of the Nonproducing Classes," *Journal of the*

method would help initiate this lifelong process of character building and character testing. A hand-mind method would “strengthen [writers’] memories” and “improve their minds,” he promised in his 1813 edition. Attention to the spacing, form, and slant of letters would instill “patience and perseverance” in the writer, thus purging “the hasty and rapid motion of the pen” triggered by “a want of proper rules to guide the mind.” In addition, because the system was readily mastered, it helped shape character by providing writers with more time to transcribe moral maxims that “hold forth virtue in the most engaging charms, and such as [they] expose immorality, might be a great barrier against profaneness and vice of every kind” (2nd ed., pp. xviii, xx, 42).

Finally, because the hand-mind writer was able to learn easily, he had less need for formally trained experts and, in some cases, even schools. Jenkins admitted that school, under the guidance of a capable instructor, was the best place to learn writing, particularly if the teacher created a comfortable environment with carefully arranged desks, well-carved pens, suitable paper and ink, and a pleasant room temperature (2nd ed., pp. 61–63). But such ideal classrooms were not widely available; moreover, many who wanted to learn could not even attend school, especially those “of a slender and weakly constitution.” With his manual and its hand-mind system, students would quickly grasp the writing process without additional assistance, Jenkins claimed, and since early success would “awaken their curiosity, and interest their feelings,” a watchful taskmaster was unnecessary. As a result, “the robust and healthy” would be “freed from long and painful confinement in school,” and the workforce would gain well-trained workers much more quickly (2nd ed., pp. xvii–xviii).

Eager to promote his system, Jenkins pressed even further. “This whole work,” he boasted in the conclusion to his 1813 edition, “is so contrived, that young gentlemen and ladies, who

Early Republic 26.4 (2006): 563–603, and Stephen Mihm, “Clerks, Classes, and Conflicts: A Response to Michael Zakim’s ‘The Business Clerk as Social Revolutionary,’” *Journal of the Early Republic* 26.4 (2006): 605–15.

have not been under advantage to learn to write, may immediately become, not only their own instructors, but the instructors of others" (2nd ed., p. 63). Jenkins's most radical claim, it links *The Art of Writing* to what historian Nathan Hatch refers to as "the crisis of authority in popular culture," a multifaceted challenge to religious and other cultural leadership during the first decades of the American republic.⁶⁹ The overall tone of Jenkins's manuals suggests, however, that he was hardly a staunch egalitarian; his closing assertion was undoubtedly an expression of self-promotion rather than ideology. Jenkins surely wanted all Americans to have access to fine handwriting and the opportunities it presented, but he also favored a standard script and method. He lambasted those who literally acted on his advice and, after reading his manual, set themselves up as writing masters. Moreover, he insisted that his method promoted virtue and respectability—aristocratic and middle-class characteristics aimed more toward separating oneself from inferiors than obviating difference.⁷⁰ Wittingly or not, however, Jenkins added one more log to the bonfire that fueled democratic and egalitarian passions in the early republic. He may not have realized the implications of his "overreach," as Ray Nash suggests. Nonetheless, his boast "open[ed] the gates to a crowd of self-anointed professors of penmanship."⁷¹

Conclusion

The Art of Writing was a practical expression of the competing values circulating during the early decades of the American republic. At the core of Jenkins's system's many promises—a common script to help unify the new nation; a simple, cost-effective method; easy access to elegance and middle-class respectability; skilled craftsmen who merged elegance, morals, and productivity—was a synthetic worldview that faced forward while not completely turning its back on the past. The

⁶⁹Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 17–46.

⁷⁰Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, pp. 409–13.

⁷¹Nash, *American Writing Masters*, p. 34.

progress of the new nation and its citizens, according to Jenkins, depended upon their ability to fuse old and new, intellectual reflection with manual skill, aristocratic aesthetics with commercial needs. Although ultimately idiosyncratic, the method's popularity suggests that many Americans—especially in New England, where the text was conceived, published, and widely used—shared Jenkins's vision.⁷²

Within the handwriting community, Jenkins's system had its detractors. Traditionalists grumbled that dissecting letters was faddish and that thus disemboweling them would damage, not advance, writing's beauty. Alarmed by Jenkins's affront to expertise, they also complained that he had weakened professional standards and thereby unleashed a horde of poorly qualified teachers.⁷³ And for all his promises of efficiency, business people objected that Jenkins's system retarded the flow of commerce. A rapid pen interfered with the proper execution of the letters, Jenkins's protégé James Carver declared in 1809. Pupils learned best "writing a little, and writing that little slow, with a good will and inclination to perform it well, according to the system."⁷⁴ That ideal, however, ran counter to the fast-paced demands of the workplace.

In 1830, Benjamin Foster offered a detailed alternative to the Jenkins approach with his *Practical Penmanship*. Claiming that the Yankee schoolmaster had stressed the intellect and aesthetics at the expense of physical motion and speed, Foster promoted "arm movement" as a way to achieve the rapidity required in a competitive market economy. His physical method, Foster pledged, was also easier to teach and learn. Students could begin writing after only a brief introduction to the letters—no elaborate, protracted question-and-answer sessions

⁷²Henry Dean, a schoolmaster from Salem, Massachusetts, and Philadelphia's James Carver also wrote popular manuals based on the Jenkins system: *Dean's Analytical Guide to the Art of Penmanship* (Salem, Mass., 1805); and Carver's two texts, *A New and Easy Introduction to the Art of Analytical Penmanship* (Philadelphia: W. Hall Jr. and G. W. Pierie, 1809), and *The Analytical New Invented Wood Impressed Copy Book* (Philadelphia: J. and A. I. Humphries, 1810).

⁷³Nash, *American Penmanship*, p. 5, and *American Writing Masters*, p. 34.

⁷⁴Carver, *A New and Easy Introduction*, p. 23.

for Foster's students—with the help of a ligature that immobilized the fingers and forced correct arm movement. Foster's copybook quickly became a best seller, and like Jenkins's manual several decades earlier, spawned a host of imitators. By the mid 1830s, Foster's "practical" model had replaced Jenkins's "plain and easy" system.⁷⁵ Although Foster never completely rejected the importance of intellect and aesthetics in writing, his method marked a decisive victory for physical movement over deliberation and grace.⁷⁶ Platt Rogers Spencer attempted to restore a balance to penmanship in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but by 1900 it was gone again, displaced by the "practical handwriting" and "muscular movement" of A. N. Palmer.⁷⁷

Outside the handwriting world, a synthesis of hand and mind also proved untenable. Rhetoric praising the manual worker was certainly common, even popular, during the first half of the nineteenth century. Benjamin Franklin, remembered more as a leather-apron artisan than an aristocratic statesman, evolved into a national hero, and popular orators like Edward Everett eloquently equated industrious work with "The Art of Being

⁷⁵Benjamin Franklin Foster, *Practical Penmanship being a development of the Carstairsian system* (Albany, N.Y.: Packard and Co., 1830). Overall, Foster sold nearly two million copies in the U.S., Britain, and France, where his system was called the "American Model." For examples of other 1830s and 1840s manuals with a physical focus, see Dolbear and Brothers, *The Science of Practical Penmanship*, 3rd ed. (New York: Collins, Reese, and Co., 1837), and James French, *A New System of Practical Penmanship, Founded on Scientific Movements*, 14th ed. (Boston: James French, 1848).

⁷⁶See Benjamin Franklin Foster, *Penmanship, Theoretical and Practical, Illustrated and Explained* (Boston: Benjamin Perkins, 1843), pp. 22, 33, and *Prize Essay on the Best Method of Teaching Penmanship* (Boston: Clapp and Broaders, 1834), p. 24.

⁷⁷[Platt Rogers Spencer], *Spencerian Key to Practical Penmanship* (New York: Ivison, Phinney, Blakeman and Co., 1868), and A. N. Palmer, *Palmer's Penmanship Budget: An Epitome of Plain and Ornate Penmanship* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Western Penman Publishing, 1898). A small cadre devoted to italic script has continued to advocate for beautiful penmanship, yet for most today, elegant handwriting, or even handwriting itself, is an anachronism. For discussion of the twentieth-century italic movement, see Rosemary Sasson, *Handwriting of the Twentieth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 117–19, and Richard S. Christen and Thomas G. Greene, "The Medium Is the Message: Lloyd Reynolds and the Origins of Italic Handwriting in Oregon Schools," *American Educational History Journal* (Summer 2001): 39–46.

Happy.”⁷⁸ Some were concerned, however, about a gap between rhetoric and reality. In an 1826 lecture to the trustees of the Albany Academy, newly appointed professor Joseph Henry sharply attacked commonplace idealizations of the ingenious mechanic. Although widely credited with technological advances, most mechanics were not thinking workers, Henry argued. They were either unaware or contemptuous of the value of scientific experiment and placed their trust wholly in knowledge gained through hands-on activity, which Henry derided as “the habitual dexterity [of] fingers.” Theoretical concepts, not practical insights, were the keys to technological advance, Henry insisted. Unfortunately, most mechanics and Americans ignored these basic principles, which had the effect of impeding innovation. Despite his harsh rhetoric, Henry, like Jenkins, lauded workers who understood general principles as well as tools, but, he lamented, such exemplary hand-mind laborers were extremely rare.⁷⁹

Indeed, as Henry observed, hand and mind grew more distant as the nineteenth century progressed. With the expansion of large-scale production, many skilled craftsmen became what Stuart Blumin refers to as “non-manual businessmen,” entrepreneurs and engineers who marketed and designed products but did not actually make them. Less-skilled factory workers increasingly performed the job of fabrication, thus disrupting the hand-mind process of making advocated by Jenkins.⁸⁰ Jenkins’s blend of intellect and labor still existed among the growing ranks of white-collar workers, the clerks and other business types who swelled the ranks of the mid-nineteenth-century middle class; despite public rhetoric to the contrary, however, the status of strictly manual, blue-collar workers declined.⁸¹ Although traditional artisans did not disappear,

⁷⁸Zakim, “Business Clerk as Social Revolutionary,” pp. 601–4. See also Newman, “Franklin and the Leather-Apron Men,” and Everett, quoted in Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, p. 284.

⁷⁹Arthur P. Molella and Nathan Reingold, “Theorists and Ingenious Mechanics: Joseph Henry Defines Science,” *Science Studies* 3.4 (October 1973): 323–51.

⁸⁰Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class*, p. 70.

⁸¹Augst, *The Clerk’s Tale*, and Zakim, “Business Clerk as Social Revolutionary.”

Jenkins's vision of a pervasive hand-mind culture had become but a distant dream. In the end, the Jenkins handwriting system represented a relatively brief moment, during the first decades after the American Revolution, when some Americans believed that skilled craftsmanship and the thinking artisan would define the identity of the new nation.

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Memoranda and Documents

“BRIDGES OFTEN GO”: EMILY DICKINSON’S BRIDGE POEMS

SUSAN VAN ZANTEN

NO longer viewed as an eccentric recluse who lived romantically outside of history in the hidden recesses of the second floor of her family’s grand house in Amherst, Massachusetts, Emily Dickinson had, we now know, a poetic imagination that roamed freely across nineteenth-century politics, economics, popular culture, and science.¹ Reading the many periodicals that came to the Dickinson home, communicating with a wide circle of correspondents, and observing her father’s diverse business dealings, she kept abreast of her era’s innovations, including the railroad, the telegraph, and recent scientific theories.² However, scholars have yet to adequately consider her knowledge and use of another engineering marvel of the age. The bridge—its construction, destruction, and the rhetoric surrounding it—plays into a number of Dickinson’s poems, and the ways in which it does so reflects traditional Christian concepts regarding faith and salvation.

¹See, e.g., Faith Barrett, “‘Drums off the Phantom Battlements’: Dickinson’s War Poems in Discursive Contexts,” in *A Companion to Emily Dickinson*, ed. Martha Nell Smith and Mary Loeffelholz (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 133–56; Benjamin Friedlander, “Emily Dickinson and the Battle of Ball’s Bluff,” *PMLA* 124 (October 2009): 1482–1599; Betsy Erkkila, “Emily Dickinson and Class,” *American Literary History* 4 (1992): 1–27; and David S. Reynolds, “Emily Dickinson and Popular Culture,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Emily Dickinson*, ed. Wendy Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 167–90.

²On trains, see Domhnall Mitchell, *Emily Dickinson: Monarch of Perception* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), pp. 15–43. On the telegraph, see Jerusha Hull McCormack, “Domesticating Delphi: Emily Dickinson and the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph,” *American Quarterly* 55 (December 2003): 569–601, and Carol Quinn, “Dickinson, Telegraphy, and the Aurora Borealis,” *Emily Dickinson Journal* 13 (Fall 2004): 58–78. Robin Peel examines Dickinson’s scientific interests in *Emily Dickinson and the Hill of Science* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010).



The Connecticut River Valley in which Emily Dickinson lived out her days was replete with thick woods, velvet-green hillsides, and scores of bridges. Near Amherst, major bridges crossed the river to the south at Northampton and Springfield and to the north at Sunderland. A local history of Sunderland notes, "So far as can be ascertained, more bridges have been built here than at any place along the course of the Connecticut River," and the Dickinson family attentively followed the checkered fortunes of these bridges.³ The first Sunderland Bridge, built on wooden trestles, opened in 1812. Five years later it was carried off by ice, and another bridge was not erected until 1822. That one, again built on wood trestles, lasted ten years before the spring floods washed it out. The third bridge, constructed on stone piers in 1832, was thought to be invincible, but it collapsed in 1839 "as Tim Rice was driving a flock of sheep across on the way to market."⁴ Sunderland bridges were risky enterprises—spring thaw's high water and ice flows destroyed three more bridges in 1850, 1857, and 1869—and their vulnerability notorious. "Such was the reputation of the bridges around the middle of the nineteenth century," local historian Grace Hubbard remarks, "that as spring came with ice breaking up and the river in flood stage, the boys always ran to the river bank following school to see if the bridge was going out."⁵

The Connecticut River not only promoted trade throughout the valley; it inhibited it as well, as Tim Rice's unsuccessful bridge crossing illustrates. Boat traffic carried goods along a route descending through Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, but the river was a major barrier between western and eastern New England. To address the matter, public-spirited and fiscally shrewd men invested in bridges. The first seven Sunderland bridges were privately owned and operated by the Sunderland Bridge Corporation, which charged tolls ranging from 3 cents for a foot passenger to 20 cents for a double team.⁶ Given his propensity for speculation, it is not surprising that Edward Dickinson, Emily's father, was

³Grace R. Hubbard, "Bridges," in *History of the Town of Sunderland, Massachusetts, 1899–1954* (Orange, Mass.: Art Press, [1954²]), p. 27.

⁴Hubbard, "Bridges," p. 28.

⁵Hubbard, "Bridges," p. 29.

⁶Hubbard, "Bridges," p. 28.

a shareholder.⁷ His yearly financial inventories enumerate the stock he owned in the Sunderland Bridge Corporation between 1853 and 1873, with a total valuation ranging from \$560 to \$3,000, and shares were still among his holdings when he died. In 1857, when the fifth bridge was destroyed, the value of Dickinson's stock dropped from \$42 a share to \$40.⁸ About two years later, Emily Dickinson wryly refers to the instability of such ventures as the Sunderland Bridge in the third stanza of an early poem:

Why – look out for the little brook in March,
When the rivers overflow,
And the snows come hurrying from the hills,
And the bridges often go – ⁹

In a poem Dickinson's most recent editor, R. W. Franklin, has dated to 1865, a precarious wooden bridge becomes a metaphor for the uncertainty of the human condition:

I stepped from Plank to Plank
A slow and cautious way
The Stars about my Head I felt
About my Feet the Sea –

I knew not but the next
Would be my final inch –
This gave me that precarious Gait
Some call Experience – [F926]

Although some commentators have associated the movement described in the first line as that of a victim forced to walk a pirate's

⁷On Edward Dickinson's investments, see Alfred Habegger, *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books: The Life of Emily Dickinson* (New York: Modern Library, 2001), pp. 89–90, 346–47.

⁸Author's personal communication with Dotti Case, vice president of the Swampfield Historical Society, 18 September 2005, based on "Edward Dickinson's Inventories, 1850–1873," a partial list, compiled by Domhnall Mitchell. The Dickinson Inventories are in the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Papers, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, R.I.

⁹Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Reading Edition*, ed. R. W. Franklin (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 53, poem 94. Subsequent references to Dickinson's poems will be by the number assigned by Franklin. Both Franklin and Johnson, Dickinson's first authoritative editor, date this poem to 1859 (Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* [Boston: Little Brown, 1958], p. 64).

plank,¹⁰ the fact that the poem's speaker steps *from* one plank to another can be more accurately construed as her carefully negotiating the slats of a wooden bridge.¹¹ In the midst of crossing the bridge, the speaker reflects on her liminal, or threshold, experience, poised as she is spatially between the river's two banks and between the sky above and the water below. That physical point in space takes on metaphysical dimensions when the poem's speaker feels herself touched by the immensity above, figured as distant stars, and that below, a river's waters now transformed into the depths of the sea, a scene the poem effectively intensifies by craftily using the preposition "about" rather than "above" or "below" and by syntactically doubling "I felt" by means of the enjambment between the head and feet. The word "final" then explicitly casts that liminal condition as that between life and death, quite literally, the human condition: "I knew not but the next / Would be my final inch – ." The fullness of that moment coupled with an utter lack of knowledge—the "This"—at last produces the poem's end state, the "precarious Gait" that "Some call Experience."

In "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain" (F340), the plank gives way, and the poem's speaker falls into the immensity described in F926: "And then a Plank in Reason, broke, / And I dropped down, and down – / And hit a World, at every plunge, / And Finished knowing – then –" (ll. 17–20). In F1297, "A Single Clover Plank" initially prevents a Bee, poised "Twixt Firmament above / And Firmament below" (ll. 5–6), "From sinking in the sky –" (l. 4). Although the plank does not break, it is weak ("idly swaying"). "Responsible to nought," it allows the wind to carry off its visitor, and the "Bumble Bee was not –" (ll. 9, 10, 12), the "nought" that governs the cosmos rhyming perfectly and punningly with the "not" the Bee becomes. And yet, "This harrowing event / Transpiring in the Grass / Did not so much as wring from him / A wandering 'Alas' –" (ll. 13–16).



The Bee of F1297 accepts its fate without complaint, but humans are generally not capable of doing so. Nature refused to let the

¹⁰George Monteiro and Barton Levi St. Armand, "The Experienced Emblem: A Study of the Poetry of Emily Dickinson," in *Prospectus: The Annual of American Cultural Studies*, vol. 6 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1981), p. 256.

¹¹The speaker, of course, cannot readily be assigned a gender. I use the feminine pronoun here and throughout as a matter of convenience for readability.

Sunderland Bridge stand for long, but men kept rebuilding it. Employing the new field of scientific stress analysis, nineteenth-century engineers were continually refining stronger and safer bridge building materials and techniques. According to Eric DeLony, chief of the Historic American Engineering Record for the U.S. Park Service from 1987 to 2003, significant nineteenth-century innovations included the development of pneumatic caissons to sink foundations into bedrock and the use of hydraulic cement, which hardened underwater, both of which facilitated the construction of more stable piers and abutments.¹² Such cutting-edge procedures were applied to the construction of the St. Louis Eads Bridge in 1874, “which became a national symbol as it was built across the Mississippi. . . . Its construction [was] followed avidly in the press, becoming a national story.”¹³ Among the periodicals driving the public’s interest in such events were *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, *Scribner’s Monthly*, and the *Atlantic Monthly*, all of which were delivered to the Dickinson household.

One of the more fascinating engineering feats of the era was a bridge over the Niagara River. After the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, Niagara Falls became “the most preeminent American tourist attraction in the nineteenth century,” and when the railroad reached Niagara from the eastern seaboard in 1842, the crowds visiting the site swelled even further.¹⁴ In 1848, a suspension bridge, accommodating only carriages and pedestrians, was built across Niagara Gorge, but it “swayed and dipped under a heavy load or the wind.”¹⁵ The intensifying demands of tourism and commerce required a bridge capable of supporting a train, and German engineer John A. Roebling was selected to design the new superstructure. Roebling’s plans took into account both scientific and aesthetic concerns as he set out to achieve “a very graceful, simple, but at the same time, substantial

¹²My history draws on Eric Delony, *Context for World Heritage Bridges* (Paris: ICO-MOS and TICCIH, 1996), available at <http://www.icomos.org/fr/notre-action/diffusion-des-connaissances/publications/etudes-thematiques-pour-le-patrimoine-mondial/116-english-categories/resources/publications/234-context-for-world-heritage-bridges>; accessed 5 June 2012. See also Eric Delony, “The Golden Age of the Iron Bridge,” *Invention & Technology Magazine* 10 (Fall 1994).

¹³David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), p. 79.

¹⁴John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), p. 12.

¹⁵“Bridges over Niagara Falls: A History and Pictorial,” at <http://www.niagarafrontier.com/bridges.html#b1>; accessed 5 June 2012.

appearance. The four massive cables, supported on isolated columns, of a very substantial make, will form the characteristic of the work; and this will be unique and striking in its effect and quite in keeping with the surrounding scenery.”¹⁶ The Niagara Railroad Suspension Bridge, completed in 1855, extended 821 feet across the gorge’s abyss and featured two wooden decks, the upper for trains, the lower for carriages and pedestrians (see fig. 1).

Americans were attracted to Niagara Falls to experience a complex of emotions that philosophers stretching back to Longinus have referred to as the sublime. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756), Edmund Burke defined the sublime as a sensation of awe and wonder, often tinged with fear or horror, at the sight of an impressive natural phenomenon. Immanuel Kant subsequently distinguished between the mathematical sublime—characterized by endless immensity—and the dynamic sublime—characterized by awe-inspiring power and movement. In the nineteenth century, such characteristics came to be applied to engineering feats, and thus emerged the concept of the technological sublime, whereby “the awe and reverence once reserved for the Deity and later bestowed upon the visible landscape [was] directed toward technology or, rather, the technological conquest of matter.”¹⁷ In 1862, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow visited Niagara Falls. On his first day, he was “frantic with excitement” and describes his surroundings as “better than a church.” The next day, however, he finds that “Niagara is too much for me; my nerves shake like a bridge of wire; a vague sense of terror and unrest haunts me all the time. My head swims and reels with the ceaseless motion of the water.”¹⁸ Although the natural scenery prompts the poet’s fear, his response is couched in terms associated with the sublime technology of the suspension bridge.

“Something about Bridges,” an essay by H. T. Tuckerman that appeared in the December 1863 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, demonstrates the range of conceptual associations bridges brought to mind in the nineteenth century. American bridges, Tuckerman claims, are

¹⁶Quoted in Elizabeth McKinsey, *Niagara Falls: Icon of the American Sublime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 253. Roebling later designed the famous Brooklyn suspension bridge.

¹⁷Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden; Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 197.

¹⁸Samuel Longfellow, ed., *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, with extracts from his journals and correspondences*, vol. 3 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1891), p. 12.

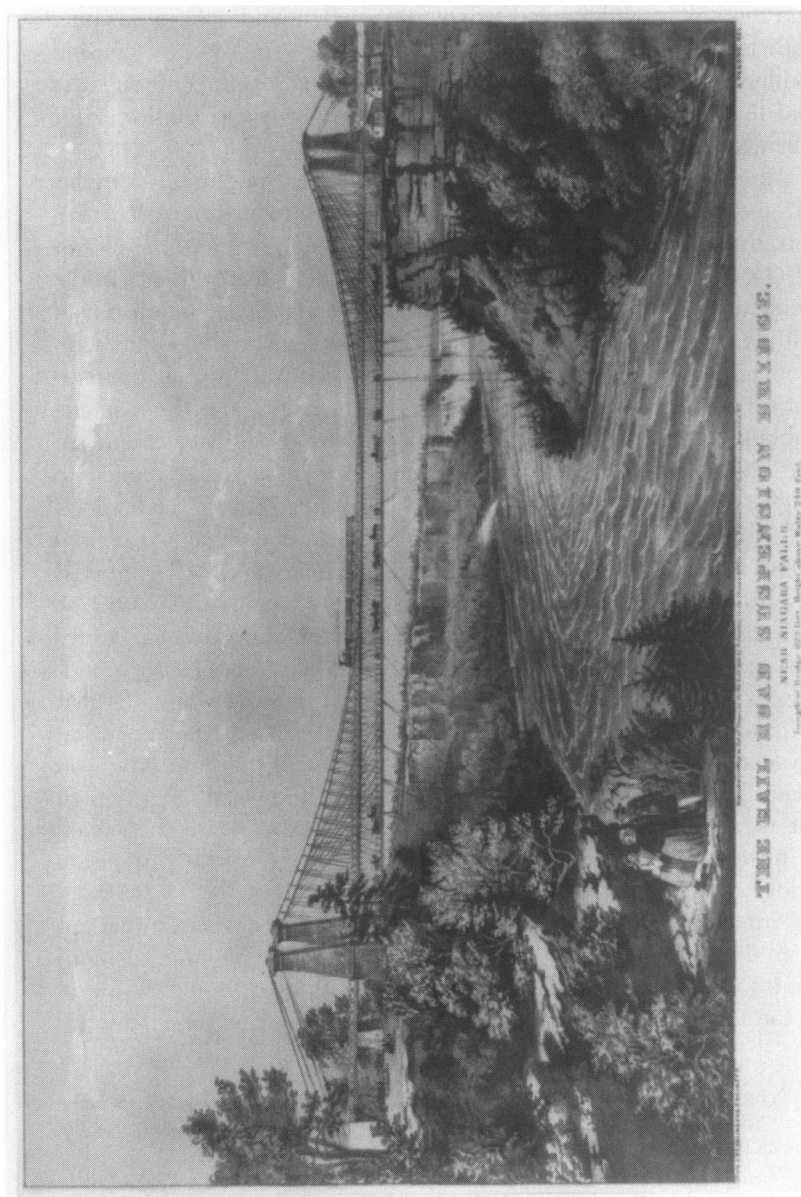


FIG. 1.—“The Rail Road Suspension Bridge, Near Niagara Falls.” Print by Currier and Ives. Image courtesy of The Library of Congress.

simultaneously scientific achievements, national symbols, natural phenomena, and aesthetic objects. In commenting that American bridges are sublime insofar as they are “suggestive of national power,” Tuckerman illustrates a particularly American version of the technological sublime that represents it, according to David Nye, as “an active force working for democracy.”¹⁹

Tuckerman was most interested, however, in the liminal quality of bridges. Bridges not only cross from one side of a ravine to another, but some are natural whereas others are manmade; they stand as symbols of both nature and technology. As such, bridges provoke a “spontaneous interest,” a “primitive” admiration, a rush of “sentiment.” “The Suspension Bridge at Niagara,” Tuckerman comments, “is an artificial wonder as great, in its degree, as the natural miracle of the mighty cataract which thunders forever at its side.”²⁰ In an essay that is itself rife with metaphors, Tuckerman claims, “the office of a bridge is prolific of metaphor.” To be sure, an element of a bridge’s sublimity is the peril it represents. “Our own incomplete civilization is manifest in the marvelous number of bridges that annually break down, from negligent or unscientific construction,” Tuckerman admits, returning again to the wonder of Niagara. “We have only to cross the Suspension Bridge at Niagara, or gaze up to its aerial tracery from the river . . . to feel that in this, as in all other branches of mechanical enterprise, our nation is as boldly dexterous as culpably reckless.”²¹



Emily Dickinson’s 1865 poem “Faith – is the Pierless Bridge” (Fg78), which reveals her awareness of bridges grander than those in the vicinity of Amherst, is controlled by the trope of the bridge. The poem receives its most extended discussion in George Monteiro

¹⁹H. T. Tuckerman, “Something about Bridges,” *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1863, p. 747; Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, p. 33.

²⁰Tuckerman, “Something about Bridges,” pp. 741, 740, 745. Sears notes that the Niagara Suspension Bridge was “an object which itself evoked the emotion of the sublime,” in a manner similar to the great falls (*Sacred Places*, p. 191).

²¹Tuckerman, “Something about Bridges,” pp. 742, 747. Unlike philosophers of the natural sublime, those writers considering the technological sublime often overlook the dual effect of danger and admiration, fear and awe that the sublime arouses. Marx is an exception. He notes, “Quite apart from any overt criticism of the new power, it is possible to detect tremors of doubt within the rhetoric of praise. Often writers use imagery which belies their arguments” (*The Machine in the Garden*, p. 207).

and Barton Levi St. Armand's study of the relationship between Dickinson's poetry and nineteenth-century American emblem books. "Faith – is the Pierless Bridge," they posit, recalls an image from Holmes and Barber's *Emblems and Allegories* that depicts a man crossing over an abyss on a wooden plank labeled "FAITH." The plank leads into a thick, black cloud, but the towers of the Heavenly City shine in the distance. Despite the man's inability to see what lies ahead, he confidently strides forth, guided by the light emanating from the illuminated Bible he holds in his hand. The verse the emblem illustrates is from 2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith and not by sight."²²

For Monteiro and St. Armand, what is most significant about Dickinson's poetic adaptation is that she omits both the Bible and the Heavenly City: "Dickinson assumes the perspective of a skeptical pilgrim. Her 'walker' is not a 'convert' . . . but a reluctant explorer whose view is completely obscured by an amorphous 'Vail,' behind which may lurk the face of God—or nothing at all." Dickinson's walker, they insist, is "doubtful," but once on the plank, "all exercise of free will is ended" as the fore-ordaining "Arms of Steel" compel obedience. The poem, in this reading, expresses cynicism about a bridge of faith and resists the concept of predestination. "Surely Dickinson's 'bridge' is the same narrow 'plank' that we find in Holmes and Barber," Monteiro and St. Armand claim.²³ However, were the bridge of faith a suspension bridge, a different reading emerges. Beth Doriani questions, "How can we visualize a pierless bridge?"²⁴ But the famous Niagara Falls Bridge was, in fact, pierless. Shira Wolosky argues that by depicting a bridge without supports, Dickinson undermines faith, but as the poet well knew, the pierless Niagara Suspension Bridge was legendary for its strength.²⁵

Opening with a one-syllable, strong-stressed word indicating the concept to be defined, F978 unites paradox and pun in its elaborate metaphor of a "Pierless Bridge":

²² Monteiro and St. Armand, "The Experienced Emblem," p. 256.

²³ Monteiro and St. Armand, "The Experienced Emblem," p. 258.

²⁴ Beth Maclay Doriani, *Emily Dickinson, Daughter of Prophecy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), p. 57.

²⁵ Shira Wolosky, "Rhetoric or Not: Hymnal Tropes in Emily Dickinson and Isaac Watts," *New England Quarterly* 61 (June 1988): 218–21. In *Emily Dickinson and the Hill of Science*, Peel asserts that this poem contests the relationship of faith and science and can be read as either a poem of faith or of doubt (p. 140).

Faith – is the Pierless Bridge
 Supporting what We see
 Unto the Scene that We do not –
 Too slender for the eye [Ll. 1–4]

Lacking piers, intermediate vertical supports, a suspension bridge nevertheless stands, hung from cables strung between towers on opposing banks of the river. “Pierless” here also suggests the pun “peerless,” incomparable or without equal, precious. The bridge extends between “what We see” and, stretching through the enjambment, what we cannot see—described in another mischievous pun as “the Scene [seen] that We do not.” The bridge itself likewise cannot be perceived, as it is “too slender for the eye,” too thin. As Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”²⁶ The sentence that begins in the fourth line, following the dash at the end of line 3, runs without any punctuation into the second stanza to present the paradox of a slight bridge that is nonetheless as strong as steel:

It bears the Soul as bold
 As it were rocked in Steel
 With Arms of steel at either side – [Ll. 5–7]

Personified as a confident and attentive mother, the bridge has “Arms of steel,” which hold and gently rock the soul to comfort it. Rather than an easily washed-out, wooden plank bridge, the poem describes a suspension bridge—constructed of steel (mentioned twice), with two strong primary cables.

In another enjambment that, so to speak, bridges stanzas two and three, we turn our attention to the scene we cannot see—the other side of the bridge—and the poem concludes with a flurry of enjambments:

It [the bridge] joins – behind the Vail

 To what, could We presume
 The Bridge would cease to be
 To Our far, vascillating Feet
 A first Necessity. [Ll. 8–12]

²⁶All scripture references are to the Authorized King James Version, the version owned and repeatedly read by Dickinson. See Jack L. Capps, *Emily Dickinson's Reading: 1836–1886* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 27–59.

As was often the case at Niagara, a veil of fog or steam obscures the pilgrim's vision, blocking sight of the bridge's far side, where cable stays tied the deck's superstructure to the walls of the gorge. Metaphorically, the veil alludes to the curtain in the Jewish temple that hid from ordinary eyes the Holy of Holies, the area only the high priest was permitted to enter. At the time of Christ's death, the temple veil was torn in two (Matt. 27:51), and the book of Hebrews associates the rent cloth with the Christian hope of salvation (6:19–20). "Going beyond the veil" was a common nineteenth-century euphemism for death, used especially by spiritualists and table rappers who attempted to contact the dead during séances and with Ouija boards. Such connotations render the amorphous veil less threatening while still retaining its mystery.

"To what" the bridge joins, we cannot see. But if we could see beyond the veil, we would not need faith; the bridge would not be "a first Necessity [*sic*]." Jerome Loving suggests that Dickinson may have intentionally misspelled the word "as an attempt to conflate 'necessity' and 'nescience,' for the absence of knowledge makes faith our necessity," but I think it more likely that it is yet another instance of Dickinson's relaxed approach to spelling, especially since she misspelled the word the same way in seven other poems.²⁷ Similar to the "precarious Gait" of poem F926, the "vascillating [*sic*] Feet" suggest an unsteady forward motion as well as wavering confidence, yet the metrical feet in neither poem waver, with the opening trochee of F978 the only deviation from the poems' common meter (alternating lines of iambic tetrameter and trimeter). The fact that these feet are also "far" points to the future, a time yet to come, when the hesitant feet will need the strong arms of faith to support them as they move through the veil of death to the as-yet unseen scene. The invisible bridge of faith floats mysteriously above the abyss and leads to the unknown, but it will carry the traveler as safely and securely along her journey as the Niagara Suspension Bridge. While the poem emphasizes the liminal nature of the bridge, which joins seen and unseen, time and eternity, it also marries fear to wonder in the juxtaposition of invisibility and strength, mystery and boldness. Evoking the religious sublime in its subject and rhetoric but abjuring the more current national allusion, Dickinson brings technical

²⁷Jerome Loving, *Emily Dickinson: The Poet on the Second Story* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 78–79. Dickinson spells the word as commonly done so only in F1425.

knowledge to bear on transcendent concepts to produce a powerful, poetic statement of faith.



In 1869, the sixth Sunderland Bridge washed out, and the value of Edward Dickinson's shares dropped from \$2,700 to \$1,000.²⁸ Dickinson died intestate in 1874, leaving his son Austin to manage the family estate, including the Sunderland Bridge investment.²⁹ Less than two years later, on 9 December 1876, a hurricane-force wind took down the seventh wooden bridge just as a local doctor was driving his sleigh over it.³⁰ Shortly thereafter, Emily wrote to her fifteen-year-old nephew Ned to warn him that "Santa Claus' Bridge blew off, obliging him to be frugal."³¹ Dickinson biographer Alfred Habegger notes that Vinnie, too, expressed concern when she wrote the old family friend Judge Otis Lord in January 1877 to inquire about the destroyed bridge and the family's finances.³² The demise of the seventh bridge, however, marked the end of the Dickinsons' investment. By legislative order, the Sunderland Bridge Corporation was dissolved, and a publicly financed eighth bridge, made of iron, was built in 1877.³³

The next year, Emily Dickinson revived the metaphor of the bridge as a support for faith. Whereas poem F978 vaunted the strength and reliability of the slender suspension bridge, poem F1459 opens with an exclamation: "How brittle are the Piers / On which our Faith doth tread –" (ll. 1–2). The supporting structures of this truss bridge are "brittle"—hard, breakable, undependable.³⁴ Indeed, "No Bridge

²⁸In her Sunderland history, Hubbard notes: "The records of Valuation of First Parish of Sunderland from 1831 to 1869 show bridge corporation shares were valued at from \$20 to \$250. In the year 1870 shares were assessed \$15, thus showing what happened following the destruction of a bridge" ("Bridges," pp. 28–29).

²⁹Habegger, *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books*, pp. 563–64.

³⁰Hubbard, "Bridges," p. 28.

³¹Emily Dickinson, *Letters*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958), letter 526.

³²Habegger, *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books*, p. 586.

³³Hubbard, "Bridges," p. 29.

³⁴An earlier version opened, "Opon what brittle Piers – / Our Faith doth daily tread," with Dickinson giving both "fickle" and "trifling" as variants for "brittle." Her selection of "brittle" in the fair copies she sent to two different correspondents emphasizes the physical construction materials rather than an attitude. R. W. Franklin, ed., *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, variorum ed., 3 vols. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1988), 3:1280–81.

below doth totter so – / Yet none hath such a Crowd” (ll. 3–4). When clumsy-footed Faith “treads” heavily, the bridge “totters,” reminding us of the way in which the “Mourners” in F340 kept “treading – treading – till it seemed / That Sense was breaking through” (ll. 3–4). Even the end rhyme is clunky, confined to the final consonant: tread/crowd. But despite its perilous condition, the bridge is crowded, crammed with the faithful, and such a surfeit of pilgrims no doubt also contributes to the bridge’s instability.

Like Dante’s lament in *The Inferno* that death had undone so many beings, Dickinson’s “Crowd” reflects the fact that by this point in her life, her father and many dear friends had died. She enclosed poem F1459 in a letter to Higginson in June 1878 announcing the death of Samuel Bowles and alluding to that of Higginson’s wife, Mary. “That those have immortality with whom we talked about it,” she commented, “makes it no more mighty – but perhaps more sudden.”³⁵ The pierless bridge of F978 was a metaphor for faith, but the brittle-piered bridge of F1459 is a liminal *surface* on which those who *have* faith walk, moving from one location to another across some kind of chasm. Could the bridge refer to death? Or might it represent the means of grace by which human beings reach God or eternity?

The poetic diction of “doth” and “hath” in lines 2–4 invokes both the biblical and the archaic, impressions that are sustained in the final four lines:

It is as old as God –
Indeed – ’twas built by him –
He sent his Son to test the Plank –
And he pronounced it firm. [Ll. 5–8]

As “old as God,” this bridge is eternal, everlasting. Line 6 opens with a strong interjection, “Indeed,” which is syntactically isolated by the dash that follows it, indicating an emphasis—surely, of course, truly, in fact. God is the structural engineer, the master builder of the bridge, the omniscient and omnipotent Roebling. With the aid of the passive tense, the line ends on an equally emphatic “him,” further highlighted by the oblique rhyme with “firm.” In a reversal of the historical development of the idea of the sublime, spiritual awe, lately applied to marvels of engineering, has been returned to its ultimate source, God.

³⁵Franklin, *Variorum Poems*, 3:1281.

The closing lines introduce a second protagonist. Reminiscent of the contemporary concern for testing the strength of bridges before opening them to public use and silently reminding us of the fragile, broken planks in earlier poems, F1459's last two lines describe how God dispatched his son to try the bridge and Christ declared it sound. Just as the slender, pierless bridge of poem F978 is securely upheld by arms of steel, F1459's bridge, apparently fragile, is in reality "firm," perhaps a faint echo of the popular hymn "How Firm a Foundation," found in *Village Hymns for Social Worship*, which Dickinson knew well.³⁶ The bridge's age-old character is reinforced by the fact that it is an outdated wooden structure, not the latest nineteenth-century iron-and-steel engineering wonder. The word "Plank," which as before refers to a fundamental structural component of the wooden bridge, also alludes to the wooden cross on which Christ was crucified. Because Jesus has gone before, through death and on to resurrection, humanity should take courage to cross the tottering bridge.³⁷

In her use of nineteenth-century bridge-building developments, Dickinson avoids the pride endemic in both American exceptionalism and human technological achievement to emphasize those aspects of the sublime that involve the ultimate liminal state between life and death, the immensity and mystery of such a transition, and the simultaneous awe and fear that accompanies the movement across the threshold. It is striking that whether describing crossing the bridge of faith in poem F978 or the bridge of death in poem F1459, both poems employ the communal third person, invoking "our" experience rather than that of the solitary, romantic "I." In the narrative structure of the romantic sublime, the poet encounters a sublime object (whether natural or technological), is profoundly moved, and then, through the power of the poem, produces a corresponding emotion in the reader, through a "rhetoric of stimulus."³⁸ In contrast, Dickinson's two bridge poems introduce a collective "We" poised in a fragile, tentative, potentially dangerous and fearful state of transition from one point to

³⁶Victoria N. Morgan, *Emily Dickinson and Hymn Culture: Tradition and Experience* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 123–25.

³⁷Monteiro and St. Armand see this poem, like "Faith – is a Pierless Bridge," as working with the emblem of the narrow plank of Faith "to produce . . . again, [an] unorthodox rendering" ("The Experienced Emblem," p. 264).

³⁸Gary Lee Stonum, *The Dickinson Sublime* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 110, 68. Stonum argues that Dickinson is motivated by the romantic sublime, which influences her affective approach to poetry and the structures in which she presents her ideas.

another, a tension that is relieved when “We” are assured that “We” are safe. In neither poem is the sublime object (the bridge) seen as “an extension of one’s own [solitary] power”; rather, it originates in God and is experienced in community.³⁹ Thus, Gary Lee Stonum’s argument to the contrary, Dickinson shows herself to be an anti-romantic in these poems. Bridge technology and the sublime operate within her texts as concepts that support an essentially traditional Christian religious understanding.

One of the more contested issues among scholars of Emily Dickinson has been that of her religious views. As *An Emily Dickinson Encyclopedia* points out, she has been claimed “as both Catholic and Protestant, Calvinist and anti-Calvinist, firm believer, and life-long skeptic.”⁴⁰ But none of those who have argued that Dickinson, despite persistent doubts, at least occasionally expressed a religious conviction have enlisted her two bridge poems as evidence for their position.⁴¹ Read in the context of the opportunities and perils of nineteenth-century bridge building, as well as the rhetoric of sublimity, Dickinson’s two major bridge poems acknowledge humanity’s shaky, insubstantial, and wavering belief while simultaneously affirming the transcendent mystery of the awful, awe-filled journey from this world to the next.

³⁹Stonum, *The Dickinson Sublime*, p. 69.

⁴⁰*The Emily Dickinson Handbook*, ed. Gudrun Grabher, Roland Hagenbüchle, and Cristanne Miller (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), p. 245.

⁴¹See, e.g., Richard E. Brantley, *Experience and Faith: The Late-Romantic Imagination of Emily Dickinson* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Roger Lundin, *Emily Dickinson and the Art of Belief*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Erdmans, 2004); and James McIntosh, *Nimble Believing: Dickinson and the Unknown* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000). Neither Brantley nor McIntosh discusses the two bridge poems; Lundin comments only on “How brittle are the Piers.”

Susan VanZanten is Professor of English at Seattle Pacific University, where she teaches American literature and narrative theory. Her most recent book is *MENDING A TATTERED FAITH: DEVOTIONS WITH DICKINSON* (Cascade, 2011).



Communications

Normal, Illinois
10 April 2012

TO THE EDITOR:

In response to Rosemary Guruswamy's review (March 2012) of *New Essays on Phillis Wheatley*, edited by myself and Eric D. Lamore: if by "prior work" Guruswamy intends to reference my *The American Aeneas: Classical Origins of the American Self*, I should like to remind her and other readers of that volume that I argued there that we must never forget that the true American self is best represented as a careful blend of the mythoi of Adam (Judeo-Christianity) and Aeneas (classical); i.e., both the Christian and the classical define us as Americans. While one strand may at times exercise a hegemony over the other, neither *ever* disappears.

I will add that *New Essays* cites Christianity some eighty times, while the scholarly *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* by the renowned critic Vincent Carretta references Christianity half as many times. Guruswamy's review fails to speak of this invaluable source (out since late spring of 2011). These observations minimize Guruswamy's claim that *New Essays* in general sacrifices "Wheatley's Christianity at the expense of attention to classicism." As well, I would caution that too close a focus on Wheatley's Christianity at the expense of attention to her classicism can lead to an overemphasis on Wheatley as an orthodox Congregationalist. As the purpose of all dogma is to stop thinking, I, for one, cannot read Wheatley's multilayered texts within such an inflexible framework.

Guruswamy holds that "[v]ery few of these essays use much scholarship beyond 2000." Yet I count at least seventy-five sources published after 1999. As to the imputation with which she concludes her tract: the essays in this volume "present warmed-over scholarship without any new revelations," each of the fourteen essays was included because its editors believed each brought new light to the interpretation of Wheatley's complex and many-layered texts. To my knowledge, no

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scholar has brought out Wheatley's connection to Vergilian georgic (Lamore), to current queer theoretics (McCulley), to Pan-Africanism (M'Baye), or to her emphasis on wonder (Billingsley).

Two further observations beg to be made. Guruswamy's displeasure with Zach Petrea's "Untangled Web" is not shared by Vincent Carretta, who in his biography of Wheatley expresses his gratitude to Petrea for bringing a letter (from his manuscript version of "Untangled Web") to his attention, thereby ascertaining that Petrea's work is assuredly useful to a major scholar (see p. 228 n. 59 in *Biography*). And then perhaps Guruswamy would alter her opinion regarding Wheatley's African roots had she consulted my *Phillis Wheatley's Poetics of Liberation*, the chapter entitled "Wheatley's African Origins"; Guruswamy makes no mention of either the *Liberation* volume (2008) or for that matter of my *Phillis Wheatley and the Romantics* (2010).

Finally, I should like Guruswamy to know I am pleased to learn that she is at work on a book which promises to connect Wheatley to the South and to the Wesleys. We urgently need such a volume.

Sincerely,
JOHN C. SHIELDS



Book Reviews

Clover Adams: A Gilded and Heartbreaking Life. By Natalie Dykstra.
(Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. Pp. xviii, 318. \$26.00.)

Any biography that ends in suicide is apt to be both written and read as the chronicle of a death foretold—and it is especially hard to avoid in the case of Marian Hooper Adams, known as “Clover,” who seems to have experienced life as a series of inconsolable losses. Born into a prosperous and prominent Boston family in 1843, Clover grew up an equal among the nation’s leading intellectuals and political figures. But at the utterly defenseless age of five, she lost her beloved mother to tuberculosis; four years later the aunt who had taken special care of her after her mother’s death committed suicide; and there is every reason to believe that her father’s death in 1885—though anticipated and of old age—left her feeling so depressed and orphaned that it led to her own suicide eight months later.

The heart of Natalie Dykstra’s interesting, if occasionally frustrating, book is Clover’s marriage to Henry Adams—great-grandson of John Adams, grandson of John Quincy Adams. After an extended honeymoon in Europe and Egypt, Clover and Henry spent twelve years together, childless but apparently happy. They settled in Washington, D.C., where Henry wrote the histories and biographies he is known for, and Clover became a celebrated hostess and conversationalist. The couple renovated two houses on Lafayette Square, built a summer home on the Massachusetts coast, and spent virtually all their time together. Toward the end of her life, Clover took up photography, filling several albums with carefully paired and sequenced landscapes and portraits. But as she and Henry were in the midst of building a new house and planning a trip to the West, Clover calmly swallowed some potassium cyanide used to develop her photographs and died within half an hour. She was forty-two.

Dykstra’s writing is often quite moving, and she recounts the basic events of Clover’s life with great skill—not an easy task, as the record Clover left is relatively thin, and both the Hooper and Adams families were notably silent about the more painful aspects of life. But

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maybe it is because the record *is* so thin that Dykstra often resorts to what Henry called the cultivation of genealogy, substituting even the most distant and incidental family names and connections for a deeper analysis of Clover's thinking. Twice Dykstra forgoes a substantive discussion of Clover's political views to quote a long, anecdotal description of a parade, and the chapter on the Civil War is particularly unenlightening. On the other hand, the decision to highlight Clover's work as a photographer is both intriguing and original.

Clover was clearly very visual. This in itself was unusual, since Boston society had inherited many aspects of Protestant iconoclasm and generally preferred literature and theology to art. But even as a child, Clover would occasionally miss church to sit and admire the sun, and on her honeymoon she was most excited by the museums she and Henry would ramble through "until brains and legs cry out for mercy" (p. 62). No wonder the lethargy she felt in Egypt seemed to arise from her inability to make sense of the new, alien landscape—for as she noted at the time, "the mind sees what it has means of seeing" (p. 66). Happily, her interest revived when Henry, who had bought a camera in London, began to photograph the bewildering scenery, thereby providing a more conventional frame of reference. This emphasis on the visual would become ever more apparent in the numerous art works she and Henry bought and in the way she carefully decorated their homes. Indeed, the first time she openly defied Henry was when she hung two portraits in the library, declaring that he could "look the other way" (p. 123).

As soon as Clover began taking her own photographs, it was evident how closely she had studied art over the years. Dykstra is probably right to say that Caspar David Friedrich's "turned-away figures" influenced her and certainly right that some of her landscapes exhibit touches of the Barbizon school, which was popular in Paris around the time of her honeymoon. Employing a pronounced chiaroscuro, many of Clover's indoor portraits also show an appreciation for Dutch and Spanish painting. And though Asher B. Durand or Winslow Homer may have influenced the many outdoor portraits that feature trees and rocks, they seem closer in feeling to certain Civil War photographs and to the rock-strewn pictures that had emerged from the western surveys of geologist Clarence King, a family friend.

Together, all of these influences resulted in a distinctly modern eye. As Dykstra points out, Clover often employed unusual camera angles to heighten the psychological effect of her photos. Her sense of design was flawless, her framing anticipated the frontal

monumentality of Walker Evans at times, and, like many modernists, she juxtaposed the photographs in her albums to subtly examine the truth of any particular exposure. If she did not experiment with the close-up, like the British photographer Julia Margaret Cameron did, she showed such a flair for the middle distance that a group of women on a rock could suggest either isolation and loneliness or voluntary solitude—exactly the sort of ambiguous environmental space that would become so important to Edward Hopper in the 1920s.

Dykstra should be congratulated for focusing on this disciplined, beautiful, and largely forgotten body of work—indeed, for treating it as a body of work to begin with. Unfortunately, she sticks so closely to her story of a death foretold that she tends to reduce the quiet images to what they might say about Clover's deteriorating psychological state. But, having recently helped to curate an exhibition of the photographs (www.masshist.org/features/clover-adams), Dykstra may have an additional study in mind. Let's hope so. For like the far more alarming work of Hannah Wilke or Francesca Woodman, Clover's photographs deserve to be seen as the legacy of her art, not her imminent death.

Andrew Menard *is a former artist and editor. His first book, SIGHT UNSEEN: HOW FRÉMONT'S FIRST EXPEDITION CHANGED THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE, will come out in October.*

American Orient: Imagining the East from the Colonial Era through the Twentieth Century. By David Weir. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 300. \$80.00 cloth; \$26.95 paper.)

David Weir's *American Orient* chronicles American cultural perceptions of the East (hence "American Orient") from the late eighteenth century until the 1943 repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) and the subsequent influx of Asian immigration; in an epilogue, the author ventures into the present day. Over the time period of Weir's study, Americans encountered the East first as a phantasm based in texts and later through Eastern immigrants, who were barred from naturalization. *American Orient* thus inquires into the American idea of the Orient during the period preceding the widespread assimilation of Easterners, in which a clearer distinction could be drawn between "American" and "Oriental."

Weir argues that American cultural engagement with the East can be organized into a series of overlapping concerns—politics, theology, scholarship, aesthetics, modernism, and mass culture—the nature of which he periodically and judiciously qualifies. He begins by charting the Founding Fathers' consideration of Confucian political philosophy, which took its precedent from a 1738 article by Benjamin Franklin. The nineteenth century, the subject of chapters 2 and 3, bore witness to Unitarian and transcendentalist interest in Hindu and other Asian theologies, the development of American Orientalist scholarship, and the vogue of Japanese art and aesthetics catalyzed by Ernest Fenollosa, a Harvard graduate and scholar of art and philosophy, and his circle of American friends—mostly New England Brahmins—who traveled to Japan. The twentieth century, as summarized in the fourth chapter, experienced a confluence of the previous trends; modernist poets like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Amy Lowell turned to the Far East in search not only of new, forward-looking aesthetics but also of values inherent in ancient Eastern political and theological thought. In his final section, Weir examines popular interest in the East, which alternately runs parallel or counter to the more erudite investigations of the preceding chapters, culminating with a study of Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth* (1931) and its Hollywood adaptation. In an epilogue that narrates the advent of the Beat Generation and the rise of yoga among post-1943 trends, Weir describes how commercial mass culture has since absorbed many of the prior phases of the American encounter with the East. Throughout his chronology runs the theme of Americans attempting to purify or authenticate themselves through their engagement with the East.

Weir deserves credit for the range of the texts he consults. He cites critical discussions that relate America to the East in a variety of spheres, from the religious to the literary to the cinematic, and he also covers primary sources as heterogeneous as colonial-era political writings, nineteenth-century religious tracts, and modernist poetry. Nevertheless, the central contribution of *American Orient* is synthetic rather than archival or even analytic, for many of the critical studies and primary texts that the narrative assimilates will already be familiar to scholars of transpacific cultural exchange. As a compendium of existing commentary, Weir's book tends to perpetuate the lopsidedness characteristic of many twentieth-century studies of Asia and America, which illuminate only one facet of the cultural exchange, often casting America as the recipient of the Eastern ideas

and neglecting Americans' exportation of their own ideologies as well as the native contexts of imported Eastern ideas.

But even if future scholarship by those versed in both American and Asian traditions will likely supersede Weir's summation, value remains in housing such a diverse population of authors and thinkers under one roof, particularly for newcomers to the emerging field of transpacific studies but perhaps for older hands as well. Weir articulates some rewarding comparisons, for instance, between the syncretism of Emerson, which casts all faiths as indistinguishable at their core, and that of T. S. Eliot, which holds that the importance of reflecting upon other faiths lies in the revelation of one's own. The book also suggests many intriguing parallels that he does not adumbrate. Weir notes that Ezra Pound, for example, translates the inscription on King T'ang's bathtub as "make it new," which Pound then invokes in support of fascism (p. 133). He neglects to mention that Confucius's quotation of this same inscription appears in a different translation in Thoreau's *Walden* (1854), where bathing becomes a religious exercise: "Renew thyself completely each day."

Like many taxonomies, Weir's phase-based arguments are useful as generalizations, even though they might not bear deeper scrutiny. His discussions of the twentieth century, of modernism, and of Pearl S. Buck strike me as particularly edifying, whereas his account of transcendentalism may capitulate too readily to received wisdom that elevates Thoreau over Emerson as a devotee of Asia. But, on the whole, *American Orient* is a fairly useful summation of America's reception of the East, the narrative of one side of an exchange that, hopefully, will be treated more holistically in the coming years.

Palmer Rampell, *graduate student in English at Yale University, is the author of "Laws That Refuse to Be Stated: The Post-Sectarian Spiritualities of Emerson, Thoreau, and D. T. Suzuki," which appeared in the December 2011 issue of the NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY.*

Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Post-colonial Nation. By Kariann Akemi Yokota. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 354. \$34.95.)

Given America's daunting, post-Revolutionary agenda of forming a government and ensuring the survival of the republic, it seems plausible that citizens of this era would have had little concern with

the creation of a national culture until Emerson delivered his call for cultural independence in the 1830s. Therefore, when considering the ways in which Americans shaped and defined their culture after the Treaty of Paris was signed, many historians focus on—or even begin with—Emerson’s “Nature” and “The American Scholar.” Kariann Akemi Yokota upends this scenario, however, not summoning Emerson until the final pages of *Unbecoming British*. She does not think him unimportant; rather, he takes up residence in her conclusion because America’s cultural cleaving from Britain has a long and complicated history that began more than a half-century before his famous essays were published. It is in detailing this process and in skillfully applying postcolonial theory that Yokota’s nuanced, well-researched, and well-written book offers a fresh perspective on the construction of American cultural identity. Yokota draws upon a wide variety of primary and secondary sources to accomplish her task. To discover the ways in which ideas and attitudes crossed the Atlantic in both directions, she judiciously examines maps, English and Chinese commercial goods, and the trade in specimens and scientific equipment in addition to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century manuscripts and printed sources.

The methods by which mapmakers came to define and understand the new nation’s physical space forms the basis for her first chapter. Here, she shows how Americans copied English maps while simultaneously introducing a “subversive American geographical narrative . . . that . . . immediately found other, less civilized groups around which to orient its assertion of civility, the South being one important example” (p. 61). Thus, Americans countered Britons’ technical and cartographic expertise, turning mapmaking into a weapon of cultural identity and independence.

Yokota’s exploration of the importance of the trade in and nature of the consumer goods that flowed from England to America perhaps best exemplifies Americans’ conflicting desires both to emulate and escape British culture. Americans’ craving for British manufactured products—especially ceramic wares—complicated the whole endeavor of separation. Building on Timothy Breen’s path-breaking *The Marketplace of Revolution* (2004), Yokota reveals how one can mine material culture to understand the complexities and the contradictions of postcolonial societies; indeed, the material culture of elites and ordinary citizens may be the best source for investigating these tensions and their resolution.

Americans’ unceasing and apparently insatiable demand for ceramics (and silk) led American merchants and seafarers into open

competition for trade goods, and Yokota's analysis of the dynamics of exchange and international relations with Canton is adept and illuminating. The embarrassments and triumphs in the dance and scramble of the English, French, Chinese, and American traders exposed the possibilities as well as the limitations of the United States' power in the wider commercial and cultural spheres. In the end, it was Americans' good fortune to live on a continent full of vast woodlands in which a curiously shaped root grew in abundance—a root that provided Americans with an advantage over their more sophisticated and experienced competitors. “Eventually, Americans would learn that their most valuable asset for carrying on trade with the Chinese was their ability to procure natural products: namely, the ginseng root and pelts they could obtain from Native Americans” (p. 144). Attentive to the part Native Americans played in this trade, Yokota, to paraphrase Daniel Richter's *Facing East from Indian Country* (2003), “faces east” not only “from Indian country” (and by extension, from North America as a whole), but, also, from China's ports.

The Chinese were not the only people interested in natural materials native to the New World. European and British naturalists and scientists were eager to accumulate specimens for scientific inquiry and for their personal collections and gardens. Her discussion of the trials and successes of William Bartram and others who hoped to gain notoriety, respect, and scientific equipment from Great Britain places *Unbecoming British* squarely in the center of the burgeoning study of the history of science in the Atlantic world in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Her further examination of the transmission of medical knowledge from Scotland (and in particular Edinburgh) reminds readers of the central place Scottish writers, philosophers, scientists, and medical practitioners occupied in this period.

Yokota's chapters on cartography, trade goods and material culture, the China trade, botanic and animal specimen commerce, and Americans' acquisition of medical knowledge are splendidly researched and carefully argued. But her concluding chapter on race and culture is in many ways her best. She weaves together the evidence of material goods and visual materials—from figurines to cartouches, cartoons, paintings, and prints—to show that what unified the British and the Americans “was a reliance on the link between American ‘whiteness’ and the materiality of civilization. . . . Like tea sets and refined objects of knowledge, whiteness was a property that joined people in London and New London together even as the upheavals of the Revolution and independence tore them apart politically” (pp. 218, 219).

Culture in its manifold manifestations would serve as a counterforce to the fears of racial decline that haunted those who saw the wilderness and the frontier as an environment that could turn back the racial and cultural clock. This worrisome possibility endured long after the Revolution, providing a counterpoint to the pervasive optimistic swagger of those who saw only progress in the advance of white Euro-Americans across the continent. For these expansionists, “whiteness [became] the foundational symbol of national belonging in postcolonial America” (p. 225).

Unbecoming British is a brilliant book. Yokota’s wide-ranging research, careful argumentation, and learned analysis place her among the best young historians in the United States. Readers with further interest in the United States’ transformation into a powerful imperial force will no doubt hope that Professor Yokota continues on this research trajectory—to the Pacific and beyond.

Harvey Green is Professor of History at Northeastern University, where he specializes in the cultural history and material culture of the United States and coordinates the graduate program in public history.

The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, vol. 9: *Poems, A Variorum Edition*. Edited by Albert J. von Frank, with Thomas Wortham. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011. Pp. cxlviii, 706. \$95.00.)

Albert J. von Frank’s long-in-the-making, masterfully edited variorum edition of Emerson’s *Poems* is a landmark study of the poetry of the nineteenth-century’s most famous philosopher and writer. There is much to praise about this volume, beginning with von Frank’s introduction, an astonishing, albeit ambiguous, critique of the representational force of language. Arguing for the complexity of Emerson’s poetics, he draws ideas from such works as the well-known essay “The Poet” and obscure journal notes to examine Emerson’s philosophy of metaphor. In so doing, von Frank reveals the intrinsic relationship between Emerson’s prose and poetry—thus rendering each impossible to understand apart from the other—and compels the reader to reconsider the artificial categories of “essays” and “poems” that usually organize Emerson’s opus.

Von Frank’s detailed tracing of the philosophical and poetic ideas that helped shape Emerson’s poetry is also worthy of praise. Readers know that Emerson fashioned these works largely under the influence

of Persian and Islamic poetry and mysticism, but von Frank's exploration into the scope and persistence of those influences makes a convincing case that the roots of Emerson's poems should perhaps be sought more in Persian works than, say, in Coleridge or Wordsworth. Citing Emerson's unfailing investment in Hafiz and Saadi from 1842 to at least 1864, von Frank argues that certain themes of Emerson's poetry derived from Hafiz or Sufi mysticism. He additionally maintains that aspects of Sufi philosophy—specifically its effort to enact a direct attachment to divinity by avoiding syllogistic reasoning, which, in Emerson's understanding, resulted in the "inconsecutiveness of the Persian poets" (p. lxxii)—played a central role in Emerson's composition process. The Sufist's effort to generate an immediacy of thought inspired Emerson in his own attempts to change the formal features of Western poetry, and, as von Frank puts it, to "move poetry constantly further from the linear, not to say mechanical, logic of the Understanding" (p. lxxii) and to scorn the continuity (and therefore question the unity) of the poetic voice. This intrinsic relationship between Emerson's effort to make a poem perform the "inconsecutiveness" that philosophically motivated it leads one to believe that he resisted any strictly formalist approach to poetry: as von Frank shows, Emerson's praise for disjunction between stanzas disturbed the central idea of Western poetics for which the oneness and continuity of voice as well as rigorously executed meter, rhythm, and closure were necessary conditions for a group of words to be defined as a poem.

If "what counts as a poem?" is the central question of Emerson's poetics, then the most admirable quality of this volume is the way in which von Frank's editing attends to it. As Ronald A. Bosco, general editor of *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, explains in his preface, this edition gives readers "for the first time since Emerson's death . . . access . . . to all of the poems that Emerson thought finished and fit to print and in the form he wished to see them in print" (p. ix). Therefore, poetic fragments that Emerson did not publish are not included in this version. Instead, the "principal focus of editorial attention" is "the individual poem and not any of Emerson's collections" (p. ix). Furthermore, von Frank and Thomas Wortham have established a theory of "copy-text" whereby they favor "the earliest feasible form of the text" or "the first printing of a poem," with preference given to the "printer's copy" (p. cxviii). They understand these original printed poems as Emerson's accomplishment of a poetic impulse, or "the line dividing the public artifact from the private performance" (p. cxix).

The established text of a poem is introduced by commentary on its sources and composition and accompanied by a chronological list of, in Bosco's words, "all the variants found in all authorized printings or editions, as well as in printings and editions, including posthumous ones, that arguably might reflect the author's intentions" (p. ix). Intention is, indeed, the most charged word in the context of Emerson's poems, for as von Frank discusses, Emerson's published poems differed from his image of the "ideal" poem. As the variants reveal, the earliest versions of his poems were severely under-punctuated, but as a poem journeyed toward publication, it grew more formal, with Emerson "promot[ing] . . . commas to semicolons" (p. xlvi) and more or less clearly indicating rhythm and prosody. As von Frank rightly suggests, because Emerson believed that a "perfect" poem should be "spared of punctuation" and be able, in its perfection, to "create its own form," such concessions to readers should be understood as a "direct measure of the alienation of the poem from the poet" (p. xlvi).

Von Frank shows that for Emerson a perfect poem was a pure process rather than a fixed entity, a form of thinking that accorded with the mental condition of impersonality he valued so highly. How, then, are we to view an Emerson poem? As a process, an entity, animation, or fixed formation? This is merely one among many crucial questions that von Frank's and Wortham's astonishing editorial enterprise will inspire scholars to consider, proving that a deeper understanding of Emerson's poetics will be impossible without this edition.

Branka Arsić is Professor of American Literature at Columbia University. She is the author of *ON LEAVING: A READING IN EMERSON* (2010) and *PASSIVE CONSTITUTIONS, OR 7 1/2 TIMES BARTLEBY*, (2007). She has edited (with Cary Wolfe) a collection of essays entitled *THE OTHER EMERSON* (2011).

Building Culture: Studies in the Intellectual History of Industrializing America, 1867–1910. By Richard F. Teichgraeber III. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010. Pp. xvi, 184. \$44.95.)

Teichgraeber, a professor of history at Tulane University, is an alert, serious, and fair-minded scholar. This book consists of a group of connected essays, first written in the late 1990s and early 2000s; they consider intellectual life in America in the post-Civil War period, when the contemporary university was taking shape in the

United States. There are about one hundred twenty pages of primary text, in addition to a wealth of illustrations, many of which have value.

Teichgraeber's concern is the normative notion of culture. In the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, Americans achieved self-cultivation through individual reflection and study. A chief embodiment of this conception was Walt Whitman. The personal and private aspects of such self-cultivation, however, slowly gave way, so that by 1900 a more organized universe of culture was coming into being. Americans founded magazines, libraries, museums, and women's clubs. Most of all, wealthy and accomplished leaders established a recognizably modern collegiate world that became the institutional locus for the provision of culture. The author's two most successful chapters examine the case of Emerson, another quintessential exponent of the earlier self-culture. Teichgraeber shows how promoters of the new university system appropriated Emerson for a more bureaucratized world of learning and humanistic appreciation. Academic authorities constructed a major role for him in a tradition of literature that undergraduates could absorb in the classroom and in textbooks, and publishers made Emerson available as a set of codified writings.

The assembled essays also evince Teichgraeber's interests in the racism and professionalism of the scholarly scene and in the emergence of an academic public. But these interests are not effectively linked to the issues of culture and higher education, the main project of the five chapters of the book.

Each essay, as it was more or less originally produced, carefully tells the reader at the start about its specific arguments. Moreover, Teichgraeber has a thoughtful bent so that each contribution often additionally proposes theories about what he is doing. He wants ultimately to secure an agenda for intellectual historians—who will in all likelihood be the exclusive readers of the book—for how they might spend their research hours on this period of American history.

The endnotes for each essay supply an account of the initial circumstances of the writing and a description of the reworking involved for the present book. Finally, as prepared for this volume, each chapter has an opening page or so in italics that further chews over what the author has said in the composition that follows, over what Teichgraeber was at first getting at, and over what still needs to be done if historians follow his lead. A six-page preface and a five-page afterword enhance this mastication. Altogether the volume is much self-digested. I wish Teichgraeber had done more substantive labor

on the topics of the book rather than regurgitating the solid interpretations made a decade ago.

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Mightier Than the Sword: "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and the Battle for America. By David S. Reynolds. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2011. Pp. xvi, 352. \$27.95 cloth; \$17.95 paper.)

To David Reynolds's credit, his new book very nearly lives up to the expectations set forth by its dramatic title. Reynolds, whose essential study *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (1988) examines the popular roots of classic (and overlooked) literary texts, has more recently published cultural histories designed for a broad reading public, including *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* (1995) and *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (2005). Now, he turns his attention to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a novel he views—along with John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry and subsequent martyrdom—as one of the two most powerful provocations of the Civil War. He asserts: "No book in American history molded public opinion more powerfully than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" (p. xi); the novel "directly shaped the political debates over slavery" (p. xii); it "gave impetus to revolutions in Russia, China, Brazil, Cuba, and elsewhere" (p. xii); and, perhaps more surprising, it "remained particularly inspiring for African-Americans and progressive whites" (p. xii) long after the end of legalized slavery.

To Stowe scholars, chapter 1 may be the most rewarding, for Reynolds deftly describes the Beecher/Stowe families' contributions to the cultural "declension" (i.e., moderation) of Puritanism, the corollary emergence in America of social reform movements (due to the "redefinition of sin as the result of bad behavior rather than of a totally depraved nature" [p. 8]), and, most important for Stowe herself and the writing of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the cultural turn toward a more intimate and emotionally rich relationship with the divine. In this last regard, Reynolds does important work in recovering Stowe's early and abiding "fascination with the visionary mode" (p. 17)—the belief that a person could communicate with the deceased or have visions of the afterlife—and in situating this belief as part of pre- and

postmillennial religious debates (p. 26). Not only does he convincingly show how the visionary mode functioned as both a personal and social coping mechanism, but he also explains how and why sentimental tableaux (like Eva's death) or Stowe's claim that the novel came to her in a vision possessed both plausibility and resonance in antebellum America.

Illuminating in and of itself, chapter 1 describes Stowe's anti-institutional and radically democratic view of religion and establishes how it anchors her handling of race. Her romantic racialism is well known, but Reynolds makes the persuasive case that it functions in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a rhetorical amalgam of religious investments and strategies for black empowerment. Stowe syllogistically reasons, Reynolds contends, that because real Christian feeling is embodied in personal and intimate relationships with Christ and other believers (rather than the cold, rational doctrines espoused by whites, as dramatized by the character of Miss Ophelia), and because African Americans feel more spontaneously and express their emotions more naturally than whites, therefore, "blacks [have] the capacity to outshine whites in what [counts] most—true religion and richly human expressiveness" (p. 39). Although Reynolds does not consider Stowe's sometimes paternalistic treatment of blacks—for example, she petulantly refused to write a preface for Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* after Jacobs decided to write her own narrative rather than provide Stowe with material for *A Key to "Uncle Tom's Cabin"* (1853)—he correctly calls out many recent commentators' anachronistic claims about Stowe's racial stereotypes and racial politics.

More generally, Reynolds uses the first half of *Mightier Than the Sword* to position *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a kind of religious and literary alembic: by combining popular discourses with images of home and family, he argues, Stowe incorporated and elevated "the cultural beasts" (p. 47) of minstrelsy, abolitionism, sensationalist literature, and temperance rhetoric. If chapter 2 sometimes feels a bit too much like a reworking of *Beneath the American Renaissance*, with Stowe now as the focal point (he gave her scant consideration in the earlier study), Reynolds's discussion of her appropriation of popular sources never fails to intrigue, as when he points out that "[h]aving Tom inspire both whites and blacks to embrace temperance was a daring move," given that "[i]n antebellum temperance reform, segregation was overwhelmingly the rule" (p. 58).

Whereas the first half of *Mightier Than the Sword* explores the biographical, religious, and cultural inspirations for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the second half recounts the novel's spectacular reception, its reproduction in the form of plays and commercial items, and its influence, which extends from the antebellum period to the present day. In regard to the novel's immediate impact, Reynolds doesn't mince words:

Uncle Tom's Cabin shaped the political scene by making the North, formerly largely hostile to the antislavery reform, far more open to it than it had been. The novel and its dissemination in plays, essays, reviews, and tie-in merchandise directly paved the way for the public's openness to an antislavery candidate like Lincoln. Simultaneously, it stiffened the South's resolve to defend slavery and demonize the North. [P. 117]

As Reynolds notes, this political impact stemmed from the fact that Stowe's text reached multiple audiences: genteel Northern and Southern readers (who thrilled to or excoriated the novel's dramatizations of civil disobedience in reaction to the Fugitive Slave Law); politicians (who both cited and castigated the novel in private and in political speeches); and most important, working-class citizens (who saw rather than read the novel via one of its many stage shows of the 1850s). Although Reynolds's causal argument here would have benefited from scholarship in not just cultural but also political history—for example, Rogers M. Smith's authoritative *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (1997)—overall the breadth and depth of historical archive and anecdote suffices.

Even more convincing—because they are more modulated—are Reynolds's claims about the complex nature of the enormously popular, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century stage and film versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. He contends that, surprisingly, these productions closely adapted Stowe's antislavery sentiments and that, with certain exceptions, their racial depictions were quite progressive for their day. Moreover, Reynolds usefully documents how these venues offered African Americans groundbreaking acting opportunities and a venue in which to present themselves directly to white audiences with skill, dignity, and, sometimes, militancy. Especially provocative in the latter section of the book is Reynolds's discussion of how *Uncle Tom's Cabin* set off a discursive “chain reaction” (p. 226): it provoked white supremacist apologies for racism in fiction (Thomas Dixon's novels) and film (D. W. Griffith's 1915 *The Birth of a Nation*), but it also catalyzed numerous counterstatements in silent film and beyond. Ultimately, Reynolds shows how *Uncle Tom's Cabin* resurfaces time and again in American history precisely

at moments of racial realignment (whether reactionary or progressive), thereby confirming John W. Forest's prescience when in 1868 he pronounced *Uncle Tom's Cabin* "the great American novel."

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Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism. By Molly Oshatz. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. x, 184. \$49.95.)

Molly Oshatz's *Sin and Slavery* demonstrates how moderate antislavery advocates were "hard pressed to explain how an institution taken for granted from biblical times" (p. 3) until the early 1800s was now understood to be wrong. As she writes in her conclusion, for these antislavery moderates, "[t]he fight against slavery involved the shocking realization that a social institution that had once been deemed entirely acceptable, if regrettable, could become an intolerable sin" (p. 146). Historiographically, she inserts her voice into a larger argument about the impact of the slave debates on biblical interpretation, the rise of liberal Protestantism, and the emergence of notions of moral progress and the historicity of moral consciousness. Oshatz takes seriously the struggle of moderate antislavery advocates who not only wanted to preserve the authority of scripture but who also sought to extend a hand of fellowship to Southern Christian slave owners. She notes: "In order to reconcile the biblical record on slavery with what they believed to be slavery's sinfulness and to find a way to denounce slavery without dividing the churches and the nation, moderate antislavery Protestants came to rely on a new, liberal understanding of truth" (p. 4). However, over the course of this book, Oshatz ultimately raises more questions than she answers.

This "new understanding of truth" consisted of several tenets: God's revelation unfolded progressively throughout human history; moral action had to be considered in its historical and social contexts; and the ultimate source of Protestant truth was the shared experience of believers rather than the letter of the biblical text. This last claim is what ultimately set the moderates apart from their more conservative Southern and Northern brethren. As E. Brooks Holifield notes, even proslavery writers were willing to acknowledge that *some* moral

progress and/or revelation took place, because they accepted the New Testament as the final unfolding revelation of the Old Testament. Furthermore, no Protestant would have denied that the historical and social context of moral action and truth was important, especially when applying biblical precepts to one's contemporary moment. But the religious authority of experience poses a perennial problem for Protestants, who are ever wary that claims of new revelation could exceed the limits of biblical revelation.

In six separate chapters, the book takes up the subjects—the early slavery debates, antislavery moderation, the antebellum slavery debate, social sin, God in history, and the new theology—that posed the greatest difficulties for moderate antislavery activists seeking to argue for the sinfulness of slavery as an institution. However, Oshatz's analysis does not radically depart from Mark Noll's conclusion that Southern defenders of slavery (and Northerners who sided with them) were increasingly isolated from the biblical interpretation of European and Canadian Protestants. She argues, "Blaming the literal, flat-footed, and racist hermeneutics of the antebellum era for the Northern Protestant failure to arrive at an adequate biblical antislavery argument obscures the depth of the challenges posed by the slavery debates" (p. 10). One might quibble at the wording of this statement; however, even if one grants its basic accuracy, one is left wondering how Oshatz defines "adequate antislavery argument" and why she believes that a progressive notion of morality constituted such a profound departure from "the entire Protestant understanding of revelation" instead of a *mere* divergence from "antebellum literal hermeneutics" (p. 10). Oshatz never quite demonstrates what was so radically new about the moderate biblical antislavery approach to revelation, God's relation to history, etc. and how, precisely, it deviated from an "entire Protestant" conception of revelation if it was shared by non-American counterparts. If, as Noll says, non-American Protestants who upheld the authority of scripture rather quickly dispatched these same biblical proslavery arguments, a Southern proslavery approach to revelation seems to have been a *specifically American* phenomenon.

Oshatz's attempt to re-periodize the emergence of liberal Protestantism is an important contribution. For her, the slavery debates mark "the beginning of Protestant awareness of the role of history and experience in shaping truth and morality" (p. 11). Also notable is her serious portrayal of moderate Protestants' struggles to reconcile an inherited tradition of biblical interpretation with a conviction that

slavery was morally wrong. Oshatz asserts that historians have unfairly criticized them, assuming that they “had more intellectual autonomy than they in fact possessed” (p. 12). Further developing this important insight to comment on the constraints imposed upon historical actors would have been a more useful path, but Oshatz is generally content to decide—in such a way that one is left with the notion that the appeal of a particular interpretation of scripture is self-evident—which side had the better biblical arguments. At other times, it seems she believes that citing the Bible’s abstract support of slavery in fact settles who was “right” in the slavery debate and explains why one faction failed to sway a broader audience. Oshatz comes close to mining a more productive vein when she notes that both sides developed “their ideas within a historical context that forced them to balance conflicting commitments, whether to both scripture and antislavery reform or to both intellectual relevancy and a biblical faith” (p. 12), though one wonders if these dichotomies exhaust the choices that were available.

Though Oshatz deepens our understanding of debates over slavery and their legacy for the emergence of liberal Protestantism, she leaves many unanswered questions. For instance, where does she place her work in relation to those historians who say that the economic argument against slavery (pitting it against wage labor) held more weight than the moral argument? She confidently writes that antislavery moderates were “morally honest” and that the slavery debate was a “real debate, not just a cloaked defense of interests against ideals” (p. 58). The word “just” carries a lot of weight. Could not a “defense of interests” be inextricably linked to interpretative difficulties? What does it mean to say that the slave debate was a “real” debate? Was it less real if it indeed involved (as it most certainly did) very real or concrete economic, political, and social stakes? Could it ever have been solely a debate about slavery in the abstract, as Oshatz claims, rather than a debate about the enslavement of Africans and the moral rightness of holding them in perpetual bondage? These queries do not suggest that she is incorrect in her conclusions; instead, they indicate a need for more clarity about what the author regards as historically significant and what she believes incites and moves historical actors.

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Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism.

By Margaret Abruzzo. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011. Pp. 330. \$55.00.)

In *Polemical Pain*, Margaret Abruzzo offers a detailed and comprehensive examination of the relationship between American debates over the morality of slavery and evolving national and international notions of the meaning and limits of humane behavior. Over the course of about a century and a half, pain—once regarded as an inevitability of human life—became the focus of a wide spectrum of religious leaders, philosophers, and reformers who wrestled with its moral meaning and struggled to define what constitutes cruel behavior. Abruzzo shows how these debates both influenced and were influenced by the arguments of anti- and proslavery advocates.

Abruzzo begins in the 1690s with Quaker reformers who identified slavery as a kind of cruelty that inflicted unnecessary pain and stemmed from greed and worldliness. Meanwhile, in Scotland and elsewhere, moral philosophers started to give human pain and pleasure a new role in moral reasoning, suggesting that humans were naturally benevolent and that a harmonious society was one bound together by sympathy. William Paley contributed the controversial but influential notion that the morality of actions could be gauged by their positive benefits, while religious leaders reconceptualized good moral behavior as disinterested (but ultimately self-benefiting) benevolence. In this new context, slavery was seen as the antithesis of benevolence, for it physically and mentally brutalized the enslaved while eroding the morality of their enslavers. However, these thinkers and religious leaders were primarily concerned with how slave suffering affected the moral status of white participants and observers, not those who were themselves anguished.

Similarly, antislavery advocates initially ignored the conditions of slaves and instead attacked the slave trade. Abruzzo argues that “as long as the trade commanded the rhetorical center of the issue, white Americans could gaze into the distance, pushing aside thorny questions about their moral responsibility for perpetuating local slavery” (p. 87). Of course, this focus ignored the truth that the slave trade was conducted out of New England—it *was* local. However, the abolition of the (legal) trade in America drew attention to enslavement itself, and depictions of the cruelty of slavery became steadily more graphic. But the very acknowledgment of slavery’s cruelty fostered the public fear that the enslaved were likely to seek vengeance against their oppressors; those who considered themselves humane instead

seized upon colonization as a scheme that “benevolently undid the slave trade’s cruelty” (p. 110) and neatly removed both the moral predicament and its frightening consequences from American shores.

Abruzzo notes that the growing consciousness among Americans of the moral problem of slavery and its cruelties initially encouraged reformers to propose various gradualist, short-term strategies to guard against the potential problems of suddenly freeing the slaves, until the emergence of Garrisonianism defined slavery as so cruel that it required immediate universal emancipation. The proslavery faction responded by claiming they themselves had slaves’ best interests at heart, arguing that slavery *was* humane and that immediate freedom for the unprepared slave was the greater cruelty. These debates over slavery reshaped humanitarianism, as sympathy “morphed slowly from an abstract language of emotional or imaginative identification with sufferers to a call for concrete action to relieve suffering” (p. 128). These battles also politicized and sectionalized humanitarianism, as northerners increasingly contrasted their own sympathetic benevolence with the “larger, fundamentally inhumane culture of white male barbarism” (p. 167) in the South, which included dueling and cockfighting as well as slavery, while proslavery advocates turned to natural theology, utilitarian philosophy, and scientific racism to support their claim that true sympathy required recognizing that God had designed blacks for enslavement, and therefore captivity ensured their maximum happiness.

Abruzzo also suggests that Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* inaugurated a profound shift in the discourse of humanitarianism with respect to slavery by focusing on the slave’s suffering and placing the violation of family life at its heart. The advent of photography upped the ante, as photographs of slaves’ scarred backs graphically demonstrated the physical abuse inflicted by their masters. Finally, debates surrounding late antebellum attempts to reopen the slave trade pitted defenders who contrasted the benevolence of the practice of slavery with the evils of the trade against defenders who argued that if the practice of slavery was benevolent, then so must be the trade that delivered captives into it.

In a brief epilogue, Abruzzo argues that, from a Southern point of view, final emancipation broke enduring bonds of sympathy between slaves and their benevolent owners, forcing former masters to resort to violence and lynching as the only ways to manage feckless free blacks. At the same time, she says, Reconstruction horror stories confirmed Northerners’ pre-war conviction that the South was a morally depraved place. This last argument seems a bit too schematic; what

about the widespread Northern support for national reconciliation that David Blight and others have discussed?

What is this book really about? In her introduction, Abruzzo states emphatically that it “is not properly about slavery itself . . . or the debate surrounding it; instead [the volume uses] the slavery debate as a way to analyze the changing meanings of humaneness” (p. 10). However, the burden of her argument, especially after the first two chapters, seems more heavily weighted toward showing how the changing meanings of humaneness transformed the slavery debates.

The book raises another question: Where are the African American voices on the issue so critical to their lives and prospects? Abruzzo points out that “in 1832, William Lloyd Garrison joined black activists in accusing the colonization movement of supporting cruelty and slavery” (p. 120), but by neglecting to discuss the earlier arguments of those activists, she seems to imply that they made little intellectual contribution to the developing humanitarian understanding of the cruelty of slavery.

Finally, the author’s conscientious fidelity to both chronology and thoroughness in covering all aspects of her subject leads Abruzzo to introduce many issues again and again in successive time frames as though for the first time. For example, moralists’ assumption that distance diminishes sympathy is introduced on page 40, on page 72, and on page 136; we learn on page 88 and on page 187 that sharks followed slave ships to gorge on bloody bodies and on page 124 and again on page 210 that moral laws worked as laws of cause and effect. *Polemical Pain* might have profited from a more topical organization; nonetheless, it is a very illuminating book.

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Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America. By Richard White. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2011. Pp. xxxix, 660. \$35.00.)

Richard White’s book is a rip-roaring, thoroughly detailed malediction against the corruption and incompetence of the men who

financed the western railroads. These men, says White, harvested money without any understanding of economics. They built too many railroads across empty land that brought no business in the first decades after the Civil War. The roads repeatedly went bankrupt, surviving on bailouts until the West was sufficiently settled to sustain at least a portion of their expenses. So complete was the financiers' ignorance, claims White, that Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford, and their erstwhile friends did not even bother to set railway fares according to the costs of operation. Money in the hand was money in the pocket, and their family fortunes rose as they staved off fiscal disaster by every known technique, including lying about the books, hiding debt, and changing the law to avoid paying back investors. In fine, for these men, time well spent was time spent avoiding the facts. It could even be said, because of this national proliferation of incompetence and bankruptcy, that American financiers were forced to expand overseas to find new investors to pay old debt.

The author weaves into his narration letters exchanged among railroad financiers and politicians, putting the reader in the position of a relative who happens to be sitting in the room as the dirty deals go down. However, White also brings in a succession of measurements by which the results of these deals can be judged, the first of which is accounting. Readers familiar with railroad history will not be surprised to learn that few, if any, accounts were true or complete, as they were only designed to gull investors into buying more railroad bonds. Fair play is a second gauge, and White shows that the backstabbing among railroad magnates left them with red ink on their hands. The condition of railroad workers provides another measurement, and here, too, the titans are found wanting, as they bent every law to suit their immediate needs and broke the workers who did not attend to them. The writings of Harvard-educated Charles Francis Adams, whose thinking extended beyond pocket stuffing, add to the condemnation of the deplorable practices of Huntington, Crocker, Cooke, Hill, Stanford, Hopkins, and others. Finally, White examines the service the railroads provided to the successful ranchers and farmers and discovers that their cattle died on trains while their wheat fields were leveled to make more homes for railroad customers: farmers' profits go down, down, down as the West fills up.

This reviewer thoroughly enjoyed the nasty tales from insiders but, due to professional obligation, suggests a few cautionary notes. I would not say, as the author does (pp. 2–3), that American railroads represented order on paper only and that the reality was hodgepodge.

I *would* say that railroads grew out of plans made by many small communities to raise their quality of living through expanding travel and trade beyond local boundaries; the financiers of the western lines, however, had no such motives or plans from which to work, so they cannot be held accountable to the same social-scientific criteria. When considering why the railroads were constructed too hastily, I would add several facts: the Civil War was not the only secession problem in the history of the United States, and the railroads were built with the intention of keeping settlers in Ohio, Louisiana, and elsewhere from seceding or taking their business to British Canada, the Spanish, or even the Russians. California had been demanding rail service since the Gold Rush of 1849, and the U.S. supported the state to avoid schism and to encourage mining to pay down the government's Civil War debt. Finally, though the transcontinentals were ill conceived and hastily built, from the standpoint of the East they were also late in coming. The slave controversy and Civil War stopped easterners in their tracks from constructing railroads west of the Mississippi River and from settling in the West. These considerations—though they do not excuse any of the excesses or mistakes of constructing the railways—help balance the debate.

On the other hand, damning diatribes such as White's provide a much-needed corrective to the spate of books that depict the railroad financiers as heroes above criticism. That kind of piety is far worse than the kind that respects economics, for the former is the same piety that leads to blaming government regulation for the failure of the American railroad network. Social scientists are also tempted—as the author implies when discussing Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Wiebe—to make corruption into a scientific method or view monopoly as social order. I decidedly agree with the author that a flurry of railroad bankruptcies began in the 1850s and that monopolies were a self-interested force at odds with all legally constituted authority. Order only emerged from successful public use, and the public fought hard to make the railroads orderly enough to serve the needs of the populace. However, between 1890 and 1920, the country ran out of land to grant the railroads, government money was diverted to funding roads and airports, and the Progressives demanded honest accounting. The railroads simply met their Judgment Day in the early twentieth century when simultaneously confronted with cars, airplanes, and an enraged public.

Underneath White's hectic tale of stopgap finances and lies, this reviewer sees a solemn truth emerge: though the descendants of

Puritans lost their Puritanism when they crossed the Mississippi River, they were forced to find it again as the communities constructed along the tracks caught up with them. The enemies of the railroad barons were the very settlers, newspapers, and legal systems that sprung up in their wake between 1865 and 1900. The Puritans had pointed this out themselves: we are born evil and must continually watch over ourselves and others within a small community.

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New England to Gold Rush California: The Journal of Alfred and Chastina W. Rix, 1849-1854. Edited by Lynn A. Bonfield. (Norman: Arthur H. Clark Company of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2011. Pp. 400. \$45.00.)

The journal of Alfred and Chastina Rix is one of the most remarkable documents of its period. In the words of editor Lynn Bonfield, it is a rare “double gender” diary, almost certainly the only gold rush journal with alternate entries by a husband and wife, Alfred S. Rix (1822-1904) and Chastina Walbridge Rix (1824-57). Well-educated schoolteachers from the town of Peacham, Vermont, Alfred and Chastina knew how to tell tales and relate their inner thoughts; both imbued their entries with style, charm, and plenty of local color. Finally, the journal is quite likely the best record of an average couple’s decision to join the gold rush. And yet, for sixty years, the manuscript has remained hidden in the California Historical Society in San Francisco. Given its exceptional qualities, the question arises: why did it take so long for this outstanding document to be published?

Part of the answer lies in the meticulous editing. By her own reckoning, Bonfield worked with the journal for over forty years. She spent some of the time editing the text, separating the diary into chapters and writing introductions to each that provide excellent overviews, context, and supporting material. She has kept punctuation and spelling changes to a minimum, filled in abbreviations, and achieved a fine balance between readability and scholarly adherence to the original. And yet, she clearly took even more time identifying

the many names referenced in the diary. Alfred and Chastina, it seems, knew everyone in Peacham, from their students to doctors, from visiting preachers to residents of the town's poor farm. Their families were important: Alfred's because it included the Pennsylvania congressman and firebrand abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens (whose aunt lived in Peacham); Chastina's for its size and intricate maze of connections. The Rixes were at the center of nearly every town issue and project, from its schools and entrepreneurial ventures to its rumors, arguments, and controversies. Indeed, it quickly becomes apparent that their diary is far more about Peacham, Vermont, than it is about California. If this is indeed a "gold rush diary," then the rush must be refigured as an event that happened in the East as well as the West.

This may be why the diary remained locked away. Perhaps, more than any other document by Anglo participants in the rush, the Rix diary challenges the event's standard historical chronicle. The gold rush, according to the usual narrative, is about affording men a bright opportunity to go west, get rich, and free themselves of traditions of the East. The typical story involves an escape from women, the fantasy of going to a place where men could gamble, forgo bathing, and make money, all without government interference or clucking female prudes. It is a flight from the grey world of the East to the brilliant colors of California.

This is not the account of the Rix diary. The first entries begin in July 1849 with Alfred and Chastina's marriage, and until Alfred's departure for the Pacific, they are nearly equally balanced between Alfred's and Chastina's voices. The Peacham Academy, where Alfred served as principal and Chastina as a teacher of arithmetic and geography, was a shared concern, as were the subjects of temperance, abolition, Peacham's old guard, church, sex, and California gold. The couple clearly loved each other. They sometimes argued, and, especially after the birth of a son, they worried about money. To be sure, Alfred's voice is sometimes louder in the first two-thirds of the diary; his entries evince a teasing sense of humor along with hilarious outrage at what he sometimes believed was a stifling life in a small town. Yet Chastina's voice also comes across clearly in her records of the couple's efforts to maintain their kinship connections and in her own teasing comments on Alfred's frustrations and money-making schemes. In October 1851, Alfred left for California. Chastina remained in Peacham with the diary. She filled it with her worries, commentaries on loneliness, and notations on her work in maintaining

the couple's place in Peacham and taking care of their child. Finally, she would write of her and her son's voyage to California, where they rejoined Alfred in 1853.

In what is perhaps the most interesting element of the story, Chastina and Alfred's reunion marks the point when the diary winds down and peters out. It is as if the California sun had burned away Alfred Rix's sense of humor. For much of the rest of the diary, he is too busy working in a law office to compose entries. The few he does make are hurried and disconnected: "nothing new," "the same" (pp. 336–37). Chastina, too, has less to say, though she gives birth to a second child. The journal's lapse may have been unavoidable, as perhaps what is needed for great diaries is routine and time for thought, not dizzying experience. In the spring of 1854, the diary went silent. Alfred later added a postscript: in 1857, Chastina suddenly died. Bonfield fills in the rest of the story. Chastina died of peritonitis, possibly due to the aftereffects of childbirth. Alfred went on to become a success in San Francisco, remarried, had children with his new wife, neglected his children by Chastina, and never kept his promise of placing a headstone on her grave.

This diary's narrative is one of forged connections: the bonds between East and West and between men and women. In this story, the gold rush is partly about opportunity but mostly about separation, loneliness, and the work undertaken by supposedly homebound women to stave off creditors, care for children, and keep families together. This is primarily a woman's—Chastina's—gold rush. It is also a narrative of lost connections. Alfred Rix gained a great deal in joining the gold rush, but he lost as much: his wife, his relationship with his sons, and the frustrating but humorous social ties of life in a small, New England village.

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Ethan Allen: His Life and Times. By Willard Sterne Randall. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2011. Pp. xiv, 617. \$35.00.)

Some states have larger-than-life, early heroes who are central to the myths, legends, events, and movements of their formative decades—Kentucky's Daniel Boone; Tennessee's Davy Crockett;

Texas' Sam Houston. In Vermont, that towering frontier leader is Ethan Allen (1738–89), rambunctious founder of the Green Mountain Boys, tireless opponent of New York authority over the Vermont area, hero of Ticonderoga, enthusiastic land speculator, would-be philosopher, and author of *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*. In the 1830s, Vermonters joined the national trend of constructing a patriotic framework for interpreting the Founding Fathers against the inspirational backdrop of the American Revolution, and they celebrated Ethan Allen as the epitome of Green Mountain independence, courage, and determination.

Even in the last half-century, as scholars have chipped away at the heroic image of Allen as solely responsible for the creation of Vermont out of the New Hampshire Grants in 1777 and its survival to become the fourteenth American state in 1791, his reputation has endured. It remains smart practice in Vermont to name a product or business after the leader, to wrap oneself in his mantle if running for office, or to begin a debate on any public issue with, "As Ethan Allen said. . . ." If you are a "flatlander" from "away," Allen, with his bold, brash, and brave image, is perhaps one of the only Vermonters of whom you will have heard. When Hollywood casts an "Ethan Allen and His Green Mountain Heroes" someday, no doubt Tinseltown producers will call for the Daniel Day-Lewis of *Last of the Mohicans* or the Russell Crowe of *Gladiator*.

Willard Sterne Randall's *Ethan Allen: His Life and Times* may well produce a flurry of cinematic interest in his subject. Rejecting the recent scholarly trend toward seeing Allen as an important but not omnipotent early Vermont leader, Randall (according to his publisher's press release) squarely presents him as "the man who almost single-handedly brought the state of Vermont into the Union." In Randall's eighteenth-century Vermont, only Allen matters. Other early Green Mountain leaders of note—Thomas Chittenden, governor for nineteen of Vermont's first twenty years; Ira Allen, Ethan's youngest brother and a Champlain Valley land speculator of remarkable ambition and vision; Seth Warner, whose military abilities impressed contemporaries more than Allen's; young Turks like Nathaniel Chipman, Jonathan Robinson, Isaac Tichenor, Matthew Lyon, and Stephen Rowe Bradley, who in the 1780s displaced the Allens and their allies atop Vermont's political pyramid—inhabit Allen's universe as mildly interesting but decidedly lesser players. Since 1980, Aleine Austin (*Matthew Lyon: "New Man" of the Democratic Revolution* [1981]),

Randolph A. Roth (*The Democratic Dilemma* [1987]), Michael Sherman (*A More Perfect Union* [1991]), Robert A. Shalhope (*Bennington and the Green Mountain Boys* [1996]), Frank Smallwood (*Thomas Chittenden* [1997]), and others have ably laid the groundwork for assessing Allen as a key participant, or even as first among equals, in the struggle for control of the area between the Hudson and Connecticut Rivers. But Randall rejects that approach in favor of a traditional Great Man portrayal of his subject; Allen is a titan, and his Vermont contemporaries are mere mortals who would have been lost without him.

There are strengths to Randall's book, to be sure. He writes much better than most academics, and he knows how to tell a lively tale with his hero emerging as a fascinating, sometimes compelling, figure. Unlike many biographers, the author also paints a broad backdrop for his narrative, including short essays on smallpox, iron making, religion, philosophy, land speculation, and other aspects of early America. Although these pieces significantly lengthen the book, and occasionally his subject's life disappears for too long, they effectively set the national stage for Allen's northern New England story.

Randall's earlier works on George Washington, Benedict Arnold, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton have made him expert in the "and times" aspects of his project. Readers familiar with previous books about Allen—most notably John Pell's *Ethan Allen* (1929), Charles A. Jellison's *Ethan Allen: Frontier Rebel* (1969), and Michael A. Bellesiles's *Revolutionary Outlaws: Ethan Allen and the Struggle for Independence on the Early American Frontier* (1993)—will find this historical breadth the most useful and impressive new aspect of this work. Vermonters will notice, however, that the 1738–70 American background is more thorough than the discussion of 1770–89 Vermont. Still, if the dust jacket's claims—that Randall "challenges our conventional understanding of this largely unexamined founding father" and "unlocks a trove of new source material"—do not fully come to fruition in this volume, the biographer does shine a strong beam on his subject, which scholars and general readers alike will see as interesting and instructive.

That said, this book has regrettable weaknesses. On the substantive side, for example, Randall states that there were more than sixty pre-Civil War editions of Allen's *Narrative* (pp. xi, 535) and describes it as "one of the most widely read books during the first half of the nineteenth century" (p. 474). In fact, there were only eight editions

between 1800 and 1860 and four of them from minor Burlington, Vermont, bookseller Chauncey Goodrich: an unlikely base for giving the memoir large circulation outside the state. A fair number of similar exaggerations serve principally to support the author's insistence that Allen alone was important in 1770–89 Vermont; removing such hyperbole would seriously undercut his argument.

Additionally, there are simply too many factual, geographical, and chronological errors in this biography. Tarring and feathering was not “invariably fatal” (p. 7); Benning Wentworth granted more than half of the Vermont area, not “roughly one third” (p. 191); the two convicted Boston Massacre soldiers received brands on their thumbs, not their foreheads (p. 250); there was no “schoolhouse” in Shoreham in 1775 (p. 306); Brook Watson was one-legged, not one-eyed (p. 396); the old story about most copies of *Reason the Only Oracle of Man* burning up in a Bennington fire (p. 507) was disproved decades ago, as was the claim that the printing press used at Dresden in 1778–79 was the same one that inaugurated American printing at Cambridge in 1638 (pp. 476–77); Frederick Haldimand's headquarters were in Quebec, not Montreal (p. 482); Vermont's second East Union annexed New Hampshire rather than Massachusetts towns in 1781 (p. 491); Allen's Bennington home was a small, gambrel-roofed structure, not a “large hipped-roof house” (p. 525). Such sloppy research and fact-checking are unfortunate in a work of this kind. Perhaps Randall and W. W. Norton will enlist the help of specialists in early northern New England and the Revolution to correct the mistakes for a second printing; the result should be a noticeably improved book.

Until then, Randall's will remain a valuable but flawed volume. Students of early Vermont and American history will have to wait for a book that more fully examines both Allen's life and the evolution of his historical image against those of the Boones, Crocketts, and Houstons to whom he merits comparison. It will be a shame if this work deflects further scholarly study of Allen for several decades, as happened in the wake of Charles A. Jellison's 1969 biography. Randall has engagingly demonstrated that Allen deserves the attention now that he so craved during his lifetime. The land that became Vermont was a Green Mountain laboratory for “the revolution within the Revolution” from 1770 to 1791, and American historians need to be mindful of that. The era of the American Revolution comes to life in Allen's exploits as soldier, philosopher, land speculator, pamphleteer, and

revolutionary, and keeping him in the historical limelight will help us gain a better understanding of eighteenth-century America.

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Death of an Empire: The Rise and Murderous Fall of Salem, America's Richest City. By Robert Booth. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011. Pp. xx, 330. \$26.99.)

Death of an Empire examines a series of events that occurred in Salem, Massachusetts, from approximately 1800 until 1830, the year of prominent local merchant Joseph White's murder and the ensuing trial. It is important to state at the outset that, despite its endnotes, this book is not a conventional historical monograph, for it lacks a clear thesis, careful, extensive documentation, and an engagement with the work of other scholars. It also, despite its title, fails to describe Salem's "rise" or fully explain its "fall." The author provides a slightly more accurate description of his work in the preface when he writes, "This book focuses on a typical, ambitious Salem family, the Whites, and what they tried to accomplish in the seaport, the nation, and the world" (pp. xii–xiii). But even this statement is misleading, for Booth centers his story on Joseph's nephew Stephen White, who is described beneath a picture opposite the title page as "Salem's foremost merchant and civic leader after the War of 1812–1815." And yet, the book also neglects to systematically analyze Stephen White's public life or his economic affairs. Instead, Booth seems more interested in describing Salem's social and economic milieu.

Booth does so in a series of vignettes that explore Stephen White's interactions with some of the well-known personalities who were native to or visited Salem, including Nathaniel Bowditch, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Joseph Story, Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, and the Marquis de Lafayette. However, this episodic tendency often makes the work seem more like an Elmore Leonard crime novel than a historical study. This atmosphere is compounded by the author's build-up to the climax of what Booth terms the "murderous fall" of Salem's overseas trade and the killing of Joseph White.

However, while the descriptions of the murder and the developments surrounding it are often gripping, Booth does not show how White's death impacted Salem's decline.

Instead of linking the killing with the fall of the port's international commerce, Booth presents the two events as resulting from vastly different circumstances. He attributes the demise of the town's overseas trade to: an increased competition in world markets following the Napoleonic Wars; the absence of transit routes from Salem to the nation's expanding inland markets; the Panic of 1819 and the general economic malaise that accompanied it; and, especially, to the protective tariffs that were enacted following the War of 1812. On the other hand, the author seems to suggest that the murder itself was precipitated by a moral failure in the nation in general and parts of the community in particular; the killing appears to be a metaphor for, or a reflection of, this degeneration.

Though general readers may enjoy this book, scholars will be troubled by the superficiality of its analysis and annotation, which is immediately evident in the preface, the only place where Booth addresses Salem's "rise," an event he attributes primarily to the actions of a single local merchant, Elias H. Derby. Booth makes his case regarding Derby's significance by simply saying that he was "the wealthiest man on earth" (p. xi) at his death in 1799. To document his assertion about Derby's vast fortune, Booth points to Malcolm Gladwell's *The Outliers* (2008), which itself cites *Wikipedia*. The author further states that "Derby bequeathed an empire including two hundred wooden ships" (p. xi), an undocumented and highly doubtful claim, given that James D. Phillips, in *Salem in the Indies* (1947), found that "in 1800 there were thirty-four ships, forty-five brigs and fifty-nine schooners bearing the house flags of Salem merchants" (p. 224), and Samuel Eliot Morison, in *The Maritime History of Massachusetts* (1921), says that Derby's fleet consisted of "six ships, one barque, four brigs, two ketches, and a schooner" (p. 96). Booth then concludes that at the time of Derby's death, Salem "was by far the richest place, per capita, in the United States; and so it stayed for another thirty years" (p. xi). Perhaps cases could be made regarding Salem's prosperity and Derby's fortune, but not on the basis of the arguments and evidence presented here. As noted, Booth does provide a more careful examination of Salem's decline, but his documentation is sparse, and he largely ignores the limitations of Salem's harbor, which Morison and James D. Phillips address in their aforementioned works.

Readers familiar with the town's history may also be surprised by the author's assertion that Stephen White was Salem's most prominent merchant and civic leader following the War of 1812. Aside from ignoring other affluent Salemites, this statement overlooks the fact that Joseph White was the force behind—and held the bulk of—the family fortune until his passing in 1830. Oddly, the author acknowledges this truth late in the volume when he says that Joseph forgave Stephen a debt of \$50,000 in his will. Readers will no doubt want to know more about the connection between the two men when the author states that, after being an early suspect in his uncle's murder, Stephen hired Daniel Webster as a special prosecutor in the trial of those ultimately accused of the crime.

In sum, many readers may enjoy this work as a crime story, a moral tale, and a window into Salem society during the early nineteenth century, but scholars will no doubt find its thesis elusive, its arguments thinly documented, and the author's unwillingness to engage the work of other historians troubling.

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Surveyors of Empire: Samuel Holland, J. F. W. Des Barres, and the Making of "The Atlantic Neptune." By Stephen J. Hornsby. (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2011. Pp. xviii, 270. \$59.95.)

The late eighteenth-century compilation of nautical charts commonly referred to as Des Barres's *The Atlantic Neptune* is a widely known and much-appreciated source for both New England maritime history and the mapping of the region's coastal waters. The four-volume collection of more than one hundred oversized nautical charts, which provided the first continuous nautical coverage of the North American coast from Labrador to the Gulf of Mexico, is the focus of historical geographer Stephen Hornsby's new book, *Surveyors of Empire*. Well-researched and beautifully produced, it unravels and recounts the history, from creation to publication, of what would become a crucial aid for British navigators during the era of the American Revolution. As suggested by the title, Hornsby aptly

places his story of cartographic process within both the political and economic frameworks of British imperialism during the ten to twelve years following the close of the Seven Years War and the scientific context of the mid-eighteenth-century European Enlightenment.

Because Joseph Frederick Willet Des Barres (1729–1824) oversaw its publication, *The Atlantic Neptune* is bibliographically identified as his creation; however, the book is anything but the work of a single man, as most of the charts were in fact primarily based on the findings of Canadian and New England survey parties (directed by Des Barres and leading British surveyor in North America, Samuel Holland [1729–1801]) composed of a variety of naval and surveying personnel. Hornsby relates the process by which the teams conducted these topographic and hydrographic studies and, through the publication of *The Atlantic Neptune*, the eventual dissemination of the findings to a wider military, maritime, and mercantile audience.

Hornsby organizes his account of the surveys into six chapters. In the first, he examines the origins of the surveys in the close of the Seven Years War in North America. To better understand the British territorial gains in northeastern North America, the British army instituted the Survey of Canada, a large-scale topographic exploration directed by Holland. Meanwhile, the British Admiralty called for surveys of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the Gulf Coast, with Des Barres assuming responsibility for the Nova Scotia appraisal. Following the course of the surveys, the next two chapters outline the annual, geographic progress of each and explore the difficult logistics involved in such a comprehensive and thorough undertaking. Chapter 4 focuses on the manuscript charts and the influence of detailed coastal and cadastral surveys on the naming and settlement of the newly acquired territories. The next chapter looks at the relationship between the surveys and Des Barres's and Holland's land speculations. Hornsby closes with an epilogue that reviews the two men's long careers after the completion of the coastal surveys and assesses their contributions to the mapping of colonial North America.

The sixth chapter is no doubt the most intriguing for map curators and historians of cartography, as it reveals the complex history of preparing the charts, initially only available in government archives, for publication and, consequently, public consumption. To begin, each manuscript chart was engraved either to be sold separately or combined to create an atlas. Individual plates were revised several times, generating a complex bibliography with multiple versions of each chart. The first charts were published in 1774, and the

primary printing was not completed until 1782. Although the contents of individual copies of *The Atlantic Neptune* varied, each generally included approximately 176 plates, with as many as 110 charts and 40 pages of coastal views or profiles.

Hornsby's study is one of the best historical examinations of cartographic process and bibliography that I have seen in quite some time. It is well written and has a clearly stated argument amplified by well-articulated theses and summary statements. Second, it is beautifully designed and produced, with seventy-eight illustrations, including contemporary landscape paintings and portraits and expertly cropped details and reproductions from individual charts. Most fascinating of all are its reconstructed maps delineating the course and extent of each survey party's progress on a yearly basis and the graphic indexes showing each published chart's and view's location and coverage. Additionally, the appendices provide listings of the manuscript survey charts that survive among the holdings of archives and institutions, including those in the Henry Newton Stevens Collection, the most comprehensive accumulation of published charts and views from *The Atlantic Neptune*, now maintained by the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London. Such features make Hornsby's contribution an essential reference tool for curators. My only lament is that the major geographical emphasis of this study is the Canadian portion of *The Atlantic Neptune*; granted, this region was the main focus of Holland's and Des Barres's survey work, but I would have appreciated further discussion of the charts covering the New England, mid-Atlantic, and southeastern coastal areas. Nevertheless, this is an exceptional book.

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A Professor, a President, and a Meteor: The Birth of American Science.
By Cathryn J. Prince. (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2011. Pp. 254. \$26.00.)

In the early morning of 14 December 1807, while it was still dark, a fiery meteor burst across the southern New England sky, raining

stones upon the small farming community of Weston, Connecticut. Residents recalled bright flashes of light and loud explosions like cannon shots, and they later found meteor fragments around their fields, barns, and houses. Despite the initial confusion and superstitions, the meteor was soon recognized as a wondrous natural event, and it created both a national and international stir. In her new book, Cathryn Prince attempts to recapture the sensation of the history-making “Weston Fall” and the drama surrounding the investigations into these stones fallen from the sky.

The lead investigator into the meteor was Benjamin Silliman, a young professor of chemistry and natural history at Yale College in nearby New Haven. Silliman was an ambitious and entrepreneurial man of science and not one to miss the opportunity given to him to enrich his reputation or his pocket when the stones practically dropped into his lap. As soon as reports of the meteor reached him, Silliman and his friend James Kingsley, professor of classical languages at Yale, rode off to Weston to collect samples and eyewitness accounts. However, witnesses proved easier to find than pieces of the meteor, as the farmers had already gathered up any treasure lying about. One ingenious family figured that if a single stone were valuable, then many stones would be even more so and promptly broke the large chunk in their yard into smaller pieces. Such behavior made economic sense: as Prince explains, the market in meteorites is still strong today, with prices reaching \$1,000 a gram. But this souvenir selling slowed down the scientific investigation, as Silliman and Kingsley searched the township for fragments over the course of two days. When they finally found a sufficient number of samples, the professors hurried back to Yale, where Silliman plunged into an exhaustive chemical and mineralogical analysis.

Science then was like science now—a priority contest, in which the first to publish gets the fame. Silliman worked hurriedly and thoroughly in his basement laboratory, and his first reports appeared in the local papers in early 1808. These initial missives forestalled any would-be rivals, but Silliman had to give concentrated thought to the question of where to publish a full and detailed analysis of his findings. American journals did not have the renown of European ones, and for an eager chemist like Silliman, the recognition of his findings by English or French savants would be worth a great deal to his scientific standing. On the other hand, curiosity was strongest on his side of the Atlantic, and for a civic-minded citizen like Silliman, an American publication would put him prominently in the public eye and might

even earn him money. In the end, Silliman wisely chose to publish a memoir both at home and abroad, thereby earning scientific credentials and winning popular praise, although he failed to turn a profit.

Silliman's scientific success forms the basis for a broader argument Prince would like to make. For her, the Weston episode marks the birth of American science in at least three ways: 1) it established the groundwork for the science of meteors; 2) it launched Silliman's "school," a characterization of his influence on other men of science; and 3) it created a wide, public audience for science. Historians of science and of the early national period will take issue with all three of these claims. Scientific studies of meteors, for example, had a long history before and after that morning in 1807, and Silliman's chemical and mineralogical analyses were not as significant to theoretical debates as Prince claims, especially given the fact that the part of the memoir that treats the origin of meteors was authored not by Silliman but by Jeremiah Day, professor of mathematics and natural philosophy (and later president) at Yale. With regard to Silliman's school, it is unclear how the Weston meteor led other men of science to new insights in chemistry, mineralogy, or geology, or how those supposed insights became the basis for Yale's position at the center of American science. Silliman's more lasting contribution to American science was his founding of the *American Journal of Science* in 1818; however, neither Silliman's editorship of the *AJS* nor his public lecturing nor his teaching at Yale was solely or chiefly responsible for popularizing science. In America, there were many itinerant lecturers and popular authors, including those of children's books, who made science entertaining and enlightening for general audiences. And fans of Benjamin Franklin will be surprised to read Prince's assertion that, prior to the Weston Fall, no American shared the scientific limelight with European contemporaries.

Prince also makes much of a dubious misquote to imply some enduring tension between President Thomas Jefferson and the professor. Jefferson, himself a scientific philosopher of some repute, undoubtedly read about the Weston meteor. But Jefferson's opinion of Silliman's analysis of the stones is not really known. Despite a lack of evidence, Prince expands on this nonexistent disagreement to illustrate the key differences between Jefferson's practical science (botany and chemistry) and Silliman's theoretical science (geology and astronomy). Here Prince has missed the mark. Silliman was foremost a chemist, not an astronomer. And her claim that the Weston meteor drove a wedge between Jefferson and New England is even

more misguided. Although it is true that Jeffersonians and Federalists disagreed on a great number of important issues, including politics, economics, religion, and philosophy, all of which Prince does discuss, the interpretation of falling stones was probably not foremost among them.

This tendency to strain the evidence in reaching for conclusions is unfortunate, for such exaggerations only diminish the meteor's actual impact. It is doubly unfortunate that poor editing mars the book; there are far too many repetitions, including the appearance of the same phrase twice in one paragraph (p. 115). Such flaws notwithstanding, the rush of Prince's prose does succeed in capturing the suddenness and excitement of the Weston Fall.

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The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England. By Sarah Rivett. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. Pp. xvi, 364. \$45.00.)

The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England is an extraordinary work of interdisciplinary scholarship and a rich and rewarding read. Rivett makes the provocative argument that Puritan religion and Enlightenment science were not at odds, as is often thought, but closely linked—that Puritanism was “commensurate and contemporaneous with, rather than antithetical and prior to, the Enlightenment” (p. 5). She asserts that the commingling of natural philosophy and empiricism with Puritanism shaped the religious culture of colonial New England from the 1630s to the Great Awakening of the 1740s. Rivett studies the writings of Puritan ministers and believers alongside those of Enlightenment philosophers like Francis Bacon, Robert Boyle, René Descartes, John Locke, and Baruch Spinoza; the activities of London's Royal Society—founded in 1660, in which scientists both ministerial and non-ministerial participated—supply important connective tissue. She argues that the “experimental religion” of Protestant reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and William Perkins “foreshadowed experimental philosophy while the Scientific Revolution offered Puritan ministers the tools to collect evidence of grace

from the souls of testifiers" (p. 5). The testimonial performances of Puritan believers and their written documentation represent, she says, "a historically unprecedented attempt to not only know the status of one's own soul but in fact to communicate that knowledge to others" (pp. 16–17).

In the first chapter, Rivett explains that though early modern Protestants believed that "Adam's fall [had] evacuated all 'primal and simple knowledge' of God from earth" (p. 23), eventually a hunger for "renewed access" (p. 67) to this knowledge and to greater salvific assurance gripped New England's Puritans. To attain this understanding, they turned to the testimony of faith: "an emergent object of scientific inquiry that potentially violated certain limits of knowledge as described by Calvin as well as natural philosophers" (p. 69). Chapter 2 outlines the origins of Puritan testimony in New England, beginning with the communal confession of faith organized by John Cotton in Boston in 1633. Rivett focuses on the testimonies collected by New England ministers such as Thomas Shepard and John Fiske, stating that "confession became not only a means of recounting the cycles of sin and redemption but also a fissure in the opaque peripheral wall separating the visible and invisible worlds" (p. 77). She contends that although Puritan women were permitted to testify in public, a "masculine norm" of testimonial witness "engendered a new form of social invisibility" for women, whose testimonies are characterized by "shyness, reluctance, and silence" (p. 74). Here the author's description of testimonial evidence as "metaphorically visible" (p. 104) allows the reader to understand that, though she rarely announces it, throughout the volume Rivett is as much concerned with metaphorical vision as she is with literal vision.

The third chapter considers Indian praying towns in connection with testimonial desire and sacred ethnography, and it relates them to the period interest in universal language theory. Praying towns constituted "laboratories of grace, where divine phenomena could be more accurately discerned and where the divine essence encoded in the Algonquian tongue might finally be comprehended and redeemed" (pp. 131–32). Rivett arranges her analysis around the "Eliot tracts" (1643–71), which she suggests "racialize[d] images of Native Americans" in "an effort to demonstrate empirically and to witness ethnographically a species-specific form of grace" (p. 143). In chapter 4, she deals with deathbed testimony, "a subgenre of the testimony of faith, born out of a theological and ecclesiastical necessity to look to places other than the public congregational performance for the

most convincing evidence of election" (pp. 176–77). Rivett remarks that the "dying words spoken by the more socially and politically marginalized drew upon a sense of assurance that was not retrospective but rather came from witnessing the 'foretastes of heaven' in the present world" (p. 182), such as in testimony by Native Americans, women, and children. Dying well was a promising sign of a person's spiritual condition because "the divine translation dissolved the threat of hypocrisy" (p. 188), which Rivett defines in her first chapter as the "religious version of philosophical doubt" (p. 31). She incorporates an excellent reading of image registration in the camera obscura as a model for thinking about the workings of grace within the human soul. In a further demonstration of her gift for engaging early modern epistemic vehicles to explain her subjects, when she examines generations of Puritan missionary practice at the praying town on Martha's Vineyard, she describes the island as "a cabinet of curiosities that might be opened and displayed" (p. 214).

In chapter 5, which addresses the significance of spectral evidence at the Salem Witch Trials (1692), Rivett daringly claims that "the devil in Salem" was not "a symbol of a fading occult worldview" but "represented a phase of an emerging Enlightenment modernity" (p. 226). In the age of mechanical philosophy, which separated "empirical and natural philosophical method from the pursuit of divine knowledge" (p. 234), "[t]he science of the soul proliferated in direct and explicit response" (p. 235). She includes thoughtful discussions of period debates about form, matter, and the Neoplatonic concept of the "plastic spirit." Eighteenth-century revivalism is the subject of the book's final chapter, with Rivett arguing that "soul science as well as its correspondent transatlantic currents of Enlightenment thought facilitated [the] transformation" (p. 272) of American religion in the era of the Great Awakening. Although the testimony of faith had mostly disappeared by the eighteenth century, it survived in small communities, including Jonathan Edwards's Northampton. Rivett maps "the theological ascendancy of the indwelling light" and "the attempt to develop inner light into certain knowledge of God" (p. 277). The volume ends much as it begins, with uncertainty haunting the desire for knowledge of the divine as it was sought in the souls of believers—with unproblematic perception and then exposure of interior spiritual phenomena goals that could be strived toward but never attained. Because true divinity was formless, sensing it, knowing it, and giving it form ultimately proved impossible.

The Science of the Soul is a tremendous achievement, the product of formidable analytical acumen that unsettles many of the ideas we have about New England Puritanism. I was consistently impressed with how Rivett acknowledges and then works through, rather than avoids, her subject's many complexities—with perhaps one exception. Rivett takes testimonial performance and its documentation as “rendering visible” that which is invisible (i.e., God, grace, etc.). But are oral and textual proof necessarily the same as visual proof? The author tends to group speaking and writing as manifestation with imaging as manifestation under the umbrella term “visual.” Perhaps Rivett is wise to leave such distinctions muddy. After all, these were not—and are not—pure categories. In another sense, however, she may be obscuring the difficulties attending the conceptualization and definition of differing modes of spiritual display. In Puritan practical theology, “saying” (or “saying” without “doing”) is often disparaged as formalism, as it could deceitfully block the view of the image of God as it truly exists—whether in better or worse condition—within one's spiritual interior. Puritan writers regularly contrast “saying” and “godly imaging.” It is mainly through what they call “the art of doing” that God is pictured, or “painted out,” by human beings. It would have been helpful if Rivett had addressed this complication and better defined what it means for oral or textual testimony to “visualize,” “exhibit,” or “display” the Puritans' invisible God.

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Martyrs' Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England.
By Adrian Chastain Weimer. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. x, 218. \$55.00.)

Adrian Chastain Weimer describes and documents the astonishing power of martyrdom—practice, concept, and ideal—as it was employed by religious and political parties in seventeenth-century New England. She begins her account, appropriately, with the post-Reformation conflicts between English Protestants and Roman Catholics that gave rise to the 1563 publication that grounded

understandings of martyrdom for generations to come: John Foxe's *Actes and monuments of these latter and perilous dayes*. Now known simply as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, the volume grants martyrs—those who endured pain and hardship for their beliefs—the highest level of sainthood. Martyrdom as both a concept and practice allowed the persecuted to comprehend and deal with their oppression, as it conferred upon those who suffered for their religious convictions an aura of holiness. In New England, the rhetoric surrounding the notion of martyrdom became a powerful device employed by a variety of parties—including colonial authors like Michael Wigglesworth and Cotton Mather, who treasured and echoed Foxe's account of martyrs from the past and identified similar figures in their contemporary worlds—over the course of the seventeenth century.

Weimer closely examines the ideology and theology of martyrdom as it was appropriated and applied by religious parties engaged in struggles that were either imported to New England or evolved from the particular circumstances of the region. First in Old England and then in Plymouth Colony, for example, the actions and judgments of the English Separatists' persecuted martyrs confirmed the group's notion that it was the true church. They viewed their fight as an aspect of the apocalyptic battle against the Antichrist and those who had been martyred as victorious in defeat. The martyr tradition played a similarly powerful role in Massachusetts' Antinomian Controversy of 1636–38, in which the supporters of the “covenant of grace,” led by the charismatic Ann Hutchinson, clashed with prominent minister John Cotton and the proponents of the “covenant of works,” including the magistrate and governor John Winthrop. The conflict that followed, intensified by apocalyptic rhetoric that leveled charges involving the Antichrist, resulted in prosecution and persecution for Hutchinson and her followers. However, both sides in the battle marched out martyrdom: Hutchinson identified herself as a martyr; her opponents declared her a “false martyr.”

In early New England, both the Baptists and the Quakers also employed the martyr ideology in their struggles against the dominant Congregationalists. The religious and political pressures—including mob violence—Congregationalists inflicted on the Baptists led the marginalized group to accept suffering as their lot, and, given their apocalyptic perspective, they associated their Congregational opponents with the Antichrist. The Quaker challenge to the Congregationalists resulted in the execution of Mary Dyer in Boston in 1660. Imprisonment, whipping, ear-cropping, tongue-boring, and banishment numbered among the punishments Quakers had to

endure before they were put to death. However, the Quakers were surprisingly comfortable with such afflictions and even frequently accepted them “cheerfully.”

Perhaps Weimer’s most unique application of martyrdom concerns King Philip’s War and New Englanders’ depiction of the Algonquians and other Native American tribes as “Satan’s colony” and Antichristian enemies. For New Englanders, the war became yet another battle against Satan, and when the Indians set a town on fire, the incident was construed as a “collective martyrdom.” The remarkable flexibility of the appellation in the seventeenth century is revealed by New Englanders’ labeling of Christian Indians who suffered or died in the war as Christian martyrs.

Weimer closes with a series of reflections regarding the martyr ideal in the post-Reformation years. Martyrdom, she asserts, was a powerful rhetorical image that drew on the experiences of agony and triumph from earlier periods of Christianity as well as from the deep anti-Catholicism of Reformation and post-Reformation Europe. She insightfully focuses on “the Protestant historical imagination” as a key factor in the construction of “the tradition of martyrdom” in early New England.

This book is wonderfully enhanced by Weimer’s use of primary and secondary literature on the religious history of early New England and the historiography concerning the larger Western apocalyptic tradition. The number of pages Weimer devotes to discursive footnotes is quite astounding: the text itself is 149 pages, the annotation 57. Many of these notes contain highly instructive primary quotations related directly to arguments in the text. It is unfortunate that these notes do not appear conveniently adjacent to the texts on which they comment or, even better, in the text itself, for many speak directly to and further illuminate the thoughtful judgments offered by Adrian Chastain Weimer.

Stephen J. Stein is *General Editor of the forthcoming three-volume CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS IN AMERICA.*

The Grand Chorus of Complaint: Authors and the Business Ethics of American Publishing. By Michael J. Everton. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 240. \$65.00.)

When I entered the publishing business in the early 1960s, I was surprised to find that an adversarial relationship—ranging from

suspicion to disdain to outright animosity—between publishers and authors was the norm. Fueled by visions of tweed jackets, aromatic pipe smoke, and two-martini lunches, I had imagined that the nexus of writing and publishing would be cordial, cooperative, and collegial. It turned out to be anything but, and, as Michael Everton shows us in this excellent book, it was ever so.

Everton's study covers the often fraught interdependence of authors and publishers from the late eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century in America, but the problems he describes could characterize times as far back as the age of incunabula and manuscript publication and as recent as the latest Google raid on out-of-print, orphaned titles. In relative solitude, authors produce more-or-less unique works in manuscript capable of attracting only a limited audience; publishers—with access to capital, the means of production, and venues for wide distribution—can reach large audiences but need the intellectual property to package and sell. The interests of these two groups often clashed.

Adapted from his University of North Carolina doctoral dissertation, directed by the redoubtable Philip Gura, *The Grand Chorus of Complaint* is a thoroughly researched, well-written, and smartly argued work of mature scholarship. I have been conversant for more than forty years with the primary documents and secondary literature on antebellum American publishing, and I am not able to point to any significant source material that Everton has overlooked. Tracing developments in the important, often studied era when publishing metamorphosed from an artisan trade practiced by printers into an industrialized enterprise run by businessmen, Everton focuses on how the professionalization of author and publisher and the contest over the distribution of profits strained the author/publisher relationship. Underpinned—but not captive to—Pierre Bourdieu's theories of cultural capital and various thinkers' ideas about ethics and morality, "one of the book's arguments is that while publishers rarely disavowed the part economic determinism or more complex versions of utilitarianism played in decision making, they also preached virtue and deontological [rule-obeying] ethics more than we might think" (p. 9). But such theoretical considerations rarely impose on or impede the rich and often entertaining historical narrative that Everton constructs. One is simply compelled to continue reading as the case studies that constitute the bulk of the book unfold.

Respectfully acknowledging the "spadework . . . undertaken by scholars working in . . . the history of the book," the author tells

us his book “is not a straightforward history of American publishing” but rather focuses “on the controversial activities of literary tradesmen between, roughly, the Revolution and the Civil War, as well as on the writers who critiqued them. It is these moments of crisis, as Bourdieu suggests, that expose the field’s ‘objective relations’ and the ‘values’ that shaped them” (p. 17). The usual suspects—Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, James T. Fields, George Palmer Putnam, the brothers Harper, Evert Duyckinck, Fanny Fern, Herman Melville, Gail Hamilton, and a host of minor characters—appear with their customary images sometimes cast in a light that is less than flattering.

The first chapter, “The Character of the Trade,” presents conflicting pictures of the publishing industry: one as a gentleman’s profession, the other as a profit-driven, commercial enterprise. A keyword here is “courtesy”—as in “courtesy of the trade,” a common term until recently—but the question is: courtesy to whom and over what? The next chapter, “Liberty and Business: The Printing of *Common Sense*,” deals with the publication of Thomas Paine’s political writings in America and the cultural critique of printers/publishers contained therein. Chapter 3, “Hannah Adams and the Courtesies of Authorship,” explores inter-authorial arguments over decorum with a focus on a legal and moral dispute between Hannah Adams and Jedediah Morse over textbook rights. The following chapter, “The Moral Vernacular of American Copyright Reform,” treats the fraught issue of copyright and international copyright agreements—a problem that was not legally settled until the 1891 International Copyright Act, long after the time frame of this book. Chapters five and six, “Melville in the Antebellum Publishing Maelstrom” and “The Tact of Ruthless Hall,” are concerned with the trials and tribulations of well-known authors and members of the “*genus irritabile*,” Melville and Fanny Fern: the morally tortured Melville wrestled with the ethics of publication in the sections of *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* that depict the aspiring author at his writing desk and in conflict with the book trade, while Fanny Fern (pen name of Sarah Payson Willis) attacked the industry in her semi-autobiographical novel, *Ruth Hall*.

The book concludes with an “Epilogue: What Lies Back of Contract” that neatly summarizes and analyzes the well-known conflict between Gail Hamilton and James T. Fields, *éminence grise* of the distinguished house of Ticknor and Fields, over royalties and contracts, or lack thereof. The issue, as outlined from Hamilton’s perspective in a fictionalized format in her *A Battle of the Books* (with something

of a “he said, she said” quality), was ultimately decided in Hamilton’s favor, much to Fields’s embarrassment.

The Grand Chorus of Complaint is a worthy addition to the growing body of sophisticated, interdisciplinary scholarship about the history of the book and print culture in America and beyond. Though covering much of the same ground and using many of the same sources as its predecessors, the book compares favorably in range and sophistication with older works such as William Charvat’s *Literary Publishing in America, 1790–1850* (1959, 1993) and *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800–1870* (1968, 1992) and more recent volumes, including Michael Winship’s *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Business of Ticknor and Fields* (2003) and Leon Jackson’s *The Business of Letters: Authorial Economies in Antebellum America* (2008). To this grand chorus, Everton adds an emphasis on the ethical standards of publishing. Literary, cultural, and intellectual historians as well as students of business practices and ethics could all profit from reading this book.

Paul M. Wright is a retired editor for the University of Massachusetts Press and founder of the series STUDIES IN PRINT CULTURE AND THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK. He is writing a monograph on the 1909–1910 Harvard Classics “Dr. Eliot’s five-foot shelf of books.”

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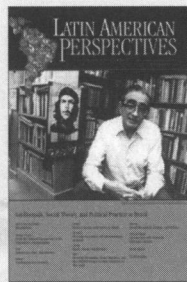
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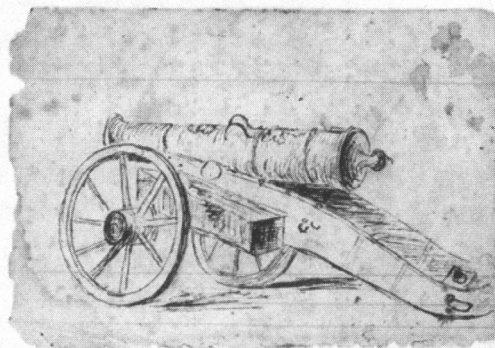
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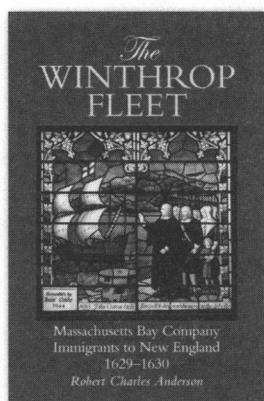
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